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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Pedagogical Material Created for ANG5106

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet essai de maîtrise, le matériel pédagogique créé par l'auteur pour un cours optionnel en anglais langue seconde, ANG5106 – *Current Events*, est détaillé et analysé, en tenant compte de plusieurs aspects contextuels. Cette matière d'apprentissage est par la suite soumise à l'évaluation par des élèves qui viennent de compléter le cours en question. Les observations ainsi que l'expérience professionnelle de quelques enseignants et enseignantes sont aussi cueillies par le biais d'entrevues semi-dirigées.

Cet essai traite de la création et de l'évaluation de tâches d'apprentissage pour un cours optionnel en anglais langue seconde à la formation générale des adultes. La réaction affective et le degré de motivation des apprenants adultes devant des textes authentiques sont explorés ainsi que l'apprentissage par les tâches. Les types de méthodologies choisis pour faire l'étude – des questionnaires à remplir par les élèves et des entrevues semi-dirigées tenues avec des enseignants, sont discutés et justifiés. Les limites de l'étude ainsi que les résultats des sondages et des entrevues sont aussi partagées et analysées.

ABSTRACT

In this research essay, the creation of pedagogical material for an adult level English as a second language optional course, ANG5106 -*Current Events*, is described and critically examined, taking into consideration numerous contextual factors. This learning material is subsequently evaluated by students who have completed the course in question. The observations and experiences of several teachers are also gathered through semi-directed interviews.

This research essay concerns the creation and evaluation of pedagogical material for an optional English course for adult students. The context of adult ESL courses is explored as are the needs of adult learners. The emotional response and motivation of adult learners to the use of authentic materials are discussed, followed by an examination of Task-based learning. The types of methodology chosen for use in this study – motivational questionnaires and semi-directed interviews – are discussed and justified. The limits of the study as well as the results of the survey and interviews are also indicated and analyzed.

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INTRODUCTION

The author of this study comes from a family where education has always been taken very seriously and there are several teachers among his close relatives. However, his path towards this field was somewhat tortuous, passing first through the creative arts. It was not until he had completed a Masters in figurative art in 2000 that he began to work in the classroom, first teaching fine art and then English as a Second Language (ESL). As someone who has been fond of narrative both in writing and in the visual arts, and who encouraged students in art class to discover a personal meaning for the artwork they created, the quality of learning material found in the ESL program often struck this author as uninteresting for adult students. It was during a period of transition, while teaching courses in both visual art and ESL, that he first glimpsed how his vivid creativity and sense of imagination might play a role in second language instruction. This notion came to realization as he began to conceive communicative lesson plans and, later on, complex tasks in the field of language instruction. The author's ESL teaching career has greatly evolved since then. He has been teaching English as a second language courses in the Marie-Victorin schoolboard for the past ten years and in 2017, accepted a permanent position at the Lemoyne-D'Iberville adult education centre in Longueuil.

Over the past several years the pedagogical renewal has been implemented in the adult sector in Quebec (MEÉS, 2015). In the previous program, ESL students primarily worked in their textbooks on narrowly focused grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing and speaking exercises. With the advent of the new orientation, inspired by the communicative competency, the textbooks have become merely a support, as teachers are required to provide complex learning situations (L.S.) which involve two or more of the three disciplinary competencies: *Speaking orally in English*, *Reinvesting comprehension of texts* and *Producing written texts* (MEÉS, 2015). In multi-level classrooms (which is the case in most FGA ESL classes) these L.S., along with other learning projects, are completed individually by the students, or else occasionally with a partner. Teachers are also encouraged to animate various activities designed to help students to develop their second language interactive abilities. Since the predominant reality in second language teaching in the adult sector obliges teachers to allow a maximum amount of time for

individual work, this research paper concentrates on material created to be used by students on a semi-autonomous basis.

Since the implementation of the new program, the ESL teachers in the Marie-Victorin schoolboard have prepared new pedagogical material in order to enrich the learning resources available to teachers and students for these new courses. From the outset, the author has engaged wholeheartedly in this exercise. Having been an avid reader of literature since his early twenties and having written poems and stories since childhood, he quickly became enthralled by the challenge of conceiving stimulating, significant scenarios and learning tasks. He has developed numerous projects and learning situations for use with his own students, but also with those of his colleagues from around the province. The author's impetus and objective have been to create dynamic material designed specifically to capture the imagination of, and motivate, adult learners. During the 2016-17 schoolyear, with the support of a pedagogical advisor at the Marie-Victorin schoolboard, he created a number of learning situations (L.S.) which were later placed online (on the website *eslquebec.wixsite.com*) by Terri Charchuk, an ESL teacher who worked for the Ministry of Education as a consultant to help with the implementation of the new program in adult education (MÉES, 2015). The author of this study was pleasantly surprised to later learn from Ms. Charchuk that several of the L.S. that he had developed were very popular with students from schoolboards around the province. This positive reaction on the part of adult learners convinced him that he should continue to develop new pedagogical material, and moreover, to enhance his knowledge and techniques in this domain.

In December 2017, he was informed that he had been chosen by the schoolboards of the Montérégie region to produce the entirety of the pedagogical material for a new optional course for adults, ANG5106 – Current Events. The author seized on this opportunity with enthusiasm and the work began to take shape rapidly. His goal was to develop a stimulating course which would incite students to develop their critical thinking, as well as their ability to break down information and write or recount news reports. The reactions of his colleagues to this material

were largely favorable and several teachers began using it with students who had finished their obligatory secondary five ESL courses and who wished to earn extra credits in this discipline.

In light of these experiences, when it came time to select a topic for a research project in the Université de Sherbrooke Masters program, it seemed logical for the author to deepen his theoretical knowledge and technical expertise in the field of pedagogical development. He therefore chose to evaluate the new material that he had developed for the course ANG5106.

FIRST CHAPTER: PEDAGOGICAL MATERIAL AND MOTIVATION

1.1 Selection of several initial objectives

In the case of this research project, there is no problem per se which is being addressed. It would be more appropriate to refer to the starting point of this study in terms of an objective or even an "analyse de la demande", in the words of Van der Maren (2003), as quoted in Harvey et Loisel (2009, p. 104). The mandate given to the author of this project, of creating learning activities for the optional course, Current Events, required the introduction of students to the analysis and production of journalistic texts. This exercise seemed extremely relevant in an age of misinformation and outright fake news. Moreover, knowing that adult learners tend to lose their motivation, there was an additional incentive to construct dynamic and stimulating content and tasks. Finally, it seemed apparent that even for students who are strong enough in English to wish to take an advanced-level optional course in the discipline, grammar reviews as well as various forms of support for text analysis and construction would be necessary.

1.2 Identification of corresponding fields of knowledge

In order to better understand the problematic of the creation of pedagogical material, it seems imperative to explore the following fields of knowledge: optimal strategies for creating pedagogical material in ESL, the ingredients for effective task-based learning activities and finally the creation of learning material which contributes to student academic motivation, particularly for adult learners. We will begin with a brief exploration of the recent evolution of pedagogical material in English as a Second Language as it has impacted the author's teaching context.

Before the pedagogical renewal was implemented in the adult sector, ESL teachers in the Marie-Victorin schoolboard (CSMV) routinely observed expressions of boredom and frustration among their students. It should be noted here that the clientele of the CEA Lemoyne-D'Iberville, where the author teaches, is generally quite underprivileged. Compared with the adult education clientele groups studied by Julie Marcotte in an important study in 2012, in the afore-mentioned

center, there appears to be a smaller percentage of students whose profile closely resembles that of regular high school graduates. There are many young single mothers, numerous people who come from dysfunctional families, as well as those who are struggling with various problems related to their lifestyle, while a considerable number have some type of learning difficulty. Even the strongest, most autonomous students (some of whom might register for ANG5106) often have difficulty with attendance or academic habits. For many students, school does not appear to be an institution that they feel spontaneously drawn toward; many of them seem to be in class because they must complete their diploma in order to establish a more stable life for themselves and/or their family. As Hrimech (2009) points out in an article on adult education in Quebec, completing one's secondary education is essential in order to accede to any kind of meaningful and decently remunerated employment.

Throughout the author's time teaching in the former pedagogical program by objectives, it was possible to improve and vary one's teaching methods as well as one's style of interaction with the members of the class. These efforts might lead to a certain increase in enthusiasm, observable among the English learners. However, in the final analysis, most continued to have difficulty remaining focused on their assignments. All of the instructor's efforts in class could not compensate for the effect of material which did not activate the students' interests as expressed in classroom discussions. These topics include humour, music, film, television series, horror stories, sensational news, controversial social issues, crime and mysteries. The texts, the tasks to be completed and the grammar exercises in the textbooks often seemed to miss their target. As well, since the exams did not evaluate the communicative competency, few students saw the utility of consistently participating in more innovative, authentic or dynamic activities in the classroom.

Three years ago, the new competency-based courses were introduced on the DBE (Diversified Basic Education) level and ESL teachers have since begun to adapt their methods of instruction as well as the pedagogical material used, in order to accommodate an approach which is geared toward interaction in authentic situations (MEES, 2015). Nevertheless, all has not been remedied. The new textbooks still do not appear to generate a great deal of enthusiasm among students, due to a seeming dearth of themes and texts which might excite their imagination. This is a widespread phenomenon which was observed by an expert in second language learner

motivation, Dornyei (2001). Dornyei (2001) claims that the problem is due to the need for textbook publishers to please (or avoid alienating) the wide range of teachers and students who constitute their market. For example, in the secondary four *Connecting Doors* textbook which is used throughout the Marie-Victorin school board, the students are presented with several different models of cell phones which they must compare, (a topic that, although not unique, they can relate to); however, elsewhere, they are asked to read informative texts about restaurant food inspections and methods of water purification (Gibbs & Tsiverakis, 2017). The author of this project has noticed that students rapidly lose interest (and have difficulties with comprehension) as they read and respond to such articles. Perhaps a disturbing story about either of the last two topics might have served as a hook to capture their attention. It is conceivable that many societal issues could spark the curiosity of students, if they were introduced in such a fashion. Shank (1979), cited by Poupore (2014) in a study which will be discussed at length further on, argues that shocking content may serve to heighten student interest. However, such basic motivational strategies are not always employed by designers of pedagogical material.

The contents of the newly published textbooks represent an improvement from those in the manual, *On my Own*, which was widely utilized by the ESL teachers in the author's schoolboard under the former educational program. The secondary four level book from that series contained, among other things, an article on gardening and another one about a power-outage in Quebec in the 1980's (Kimpton, 1986). One would imagine that it is important for designers of pedagogical material to base their efforts on reliable principles for creating relevant, captivating content and tasks, taking into consideration the targeted clientele.

For the past several years, this author has attempted to address such perceived failings by making a concerted effort to develop dynamic pedagogical material which is authentic and connects to students' interests, such as those mentioned above, while also proposing challenging and relevant learning tasks. Compared with the assignments either in the previous program or even in the current textbooks, it is rarely necessary to convince students of the necessity of completing the author's recently created activities. Most members of the class appear to spontaneously recognize the relevance of this material and feel a certain degree of intrinsic motivation in carrying out the tasks.

Regarding the development of linguistic knowledge, in the light of what specialists such as Ellis (2009) have proposed, the author of the present study has tried wherever possible to include grammar reviews, as well as relevant English vocabulary and expressions in task-based learning activities.

As mentioned above, academic motivation among adult learners is an ongoing challenge. In order to tackle this phenomenon, a concerted attempt has been made to select themes, such as video game addiction, which seem related to students' interests as expressed in class discussions, or else other topics such as speeding, which are moderately sensationalistic. Following the logic of Poupore's (2014) study on second language students' task motivation, it would appear that such relevant or exciting content grabs the attention of adult learners and can thus incite them to invest their efforts in learning tasks, despite many students' previous history of being unable to complete their courses while in high school.

1.3 Selection and exploration of a specific initial objective

As students in the author's class have been increasingly engaged in their studies in recent years, it would seem that improvements in the quality of the new learning tasks mentioned above have played an important role in this positive evolution. Since most ESL classes are composed of students at various levels of the program, three-quarters of each two-hour period is spent on individual work, in order to permit each class member to advance toward their academic objectives at a sustained rhythm. Therefore, it would appear that were they not intrigued by the individual learning assignments, most class members would rapidly lose interest and would require constant efforts on the part of the teacher to convince them of the necessity of completing their work. However, fortunately, this is no longer the case.

A common thread among the assignments created by the author of this study is an effective (and authentic) hook to capture student interest. In the adult sector, learning and evaluation situations are often constructed with no evaluation component and are thus referred to as *L.S.* This is the approach frequently taken by the author. In one *L.S.* on keeping dangerous animals as pets, created for another secondary five course, the students begin by reading an article about a tragic

incident in which a python in New Brunswick killed two children sleeping in an adjacent room. Another L.S., this one dealing with speeding, opens with a text about Paul Walker, the star of the *Fast and Furious* film series who died in a high-speed car accident. As most explanations of the structure of complex learning tasks and interactive lesson plans affirm, a dynamic hook is required to draw the students into the learning activity, be it on the group or individual level (Brown, 2007; Harmer, 2007).

Therefore, one might surmise that these new individual learning tasks have contributed to capturing the attention and heightening the enthusiasm of the students. Once their concentration has been accentuated, it could be argued that the adult learners are more inclined to develop their English competencies and acquire linguistic knowledge. As Ellis (2009) recommends, grammar reviews as well as vocabulary and functional language lists have been inserted into these task-based assignments. Ellis (2009) maintains that the stimulus of a non-language related objective which requires integration of the linguistic element under review, favors the mastery of the grammatical or lexical notion as a by-product of the assignment. Based on the assumption that learning material which stimulates student motivation simultaneously stimulates L2 acquisition, literature from related fields of study has been selected for this research project.

It could be objected that classroom activities involving the entire class, as a means to improve student motivation and learning, might represent a more judicious focus for this research project. However, in the adult sector, where a wide range of levels are often represented in the same ESL classroom, it is not always possible to involve all of one's students in a single lesson. In addition, adult learners often have differing deadlines (for college and pre-professional programs) as well as varying degrees of motivation and capacities for advancing in their academic subjects. This reality obliges many teachers to allow a maximum of class time for individualized learning. Since the intention here is to explore widely applicable principles for use by adult-level ESL teachers, the author has tried to identify a research objective which could be universally beneficial. Since, when it comes to time dedicated to class lessons or workshops, each teacher and clientele is unique, pedagogical methods and styles will differ from case to case. However, individual learning projects are designed to cut across these divergencies and appeal to a wide range of students, supporting their teachers' efforts to generate interest in the subject matter.

1.4 Identification of a general research objective

For this study, the objective is to validate the effectiveness of the new pedagogical material created for the optional course, ANG5106, in order to discover which elements favor student motivation and linguistic acquisition. As indicated above, the principal fields of learning which will be explored are the creation of pedagogical material in ESL as well as how this can impact academic motivation in addition to the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and competencies among adult learners.

The first objective will be to analyse how the key elements of the projects and L.S. designed by the author for the optional ESL course correspond to certain criteria that are recommended by experts in the fields of knowledge mentioned above. The conclusions emerging from the theoretical research, combined with the responses of students and teachers who have used the new learning tasks, should enable the author, if necessary, to make adjustments to the projects and learning situations for ANG5106. Furthermore, this research project could ideally provide interesting suggestions for other ESL teachers who desire to create dynamic and effective pedagogical material.

1.5 Formulation of general research questions

The following is a brief anecdote which appears to illustrate how pedagogical material can exert an effect on the intrinsic motivation of adult learners. Although it might generally be considered inconclusive or even inappropriate to relate a classroom episode in an academic paper, this particular experience would seem to serve as an apt introduction to the hypothesis that pedagogical material may generate positive emotional responses on the part of adult learners.

In the 2018 schoolyear, a student in the author's class who was often bored and lacked the ability to concentrate and accept any type of constructive criticism, gave a perceptible cry of pleasure when he realized that his next English project for secondary five was about road rage. He read the first article and then immediately began to search for additional English texts and videos related to this phenomenon. Clearly there was no external incentive, either social or professional, which influenced his efforts; his positive reaction was purely based on emotion. It would appear that a

sensationalistic topic such as this one has the potential of appealing to a second language student in the same way that a tabloid newspaper article might draw in the average reader. This may be especially true in the case of students at an adult education center who often reveal an interest in such topics during class discussions.

Perhaps because the topic had so intrigued him, this particular student made special efforts to pay attention to syntax, vocabulary and to speak more slowly and deliberately during the oral interaction task at the end of the assignment (his speech was habitually fast, unstructured and scarcely intelligible). It would be interesting to discover the precise link between the student's enthusiasm for the subject and his linguistic progress. This L.S. appeared to represent a turning point for him in terms of linguistic acquisition, as he was subsequently able to make significant strides in ESL after years of limited progress.

Reflecting on the effectiveness of certain projects and learning situations to awaken the enthusiasm of students and lead to genuine linguistic acquisition, one might pose the question: What are the elements of an L.S. that could attract the interest of adult learners in Quebec? Also, one could ask: What is the link between a student's intrinsic interest in an assignment and the development of second language (L2) competencies and knowledge? And, finally: Is it possible to prove that a project or a learning situation that appeals to a student principally on an emotional level, can lead to the acquisition of disciplinary competencies and linguistic knowledge?

1.6 State of the question

How can we promote the acquisition of a second language in an adult education centre?

Generally, the consensus is that it is more advantageous to begin learning an L2 at an early age (Ortega, 2013). Learners who attempt to master a second language after puberty may in certain cases succeed as well as younger students. However, according to the research, this is only possible if they make use of their superior capacity to concentrate (Ortega, 2013). How then can teachers help adult learners to focus more pointedly on their language learning?

As mentioned earlier, lack of motivation is a widespread problem in adult education centres. However, academic motivation represents an extremely vast field. Therefore, as Dornyei (2001) explains, it would be more efficient to study this phenomenon in connection with the specific

discipline in question, in this case, second language acquisition. One of the pioneers in this field, according to Davidson (2012), is Robert Gardner. He established two principal sources of motivation – one connected with a student's intention to use the L2 in the future, and the other, with his or her desire to interact with the targeted L2 community (Gardner, 1968). However, as determined in a study by Belmechri et al (1998), such external sources of student motivation are strongly influenced by linguistic context.

To illustrate, the results of several researchers reveal that, in contrast to earlier studies carried out by Gardner, the desire to integrate with the anglophone community in Quebec City was very weak (Belmechri et al., 1998). In another study completed in the same city, Davidson (2012) observed that his francophone students resisted having increased contact with the anglophone community due to their desire to maintain their linguistic and cultural identity. In discussions with the present author's students at an adult education centre on the south shore of Montreal, it has become evident that many of them do not see the utility of developing their English skills to increase their employability or expand their career opportunities. Very few of them have English-speaking friends or spontaneously seek to develop such friendships. It is conceivable that the simple fact that there are relatively few English speakers living in Longueuil could be partly responsible for their lack of interest in the language, despite this municipality's proximity to Montreal, where English skills are extremely important for work and social interaction. These observations would appear to suggest that many adult L2 students do not feel impelled to learn English due to purely practical, external reasons. What leverage can adult ESL teachers then use to generate student motivation? The experience mentioned above, of the student who experienced a breakthrough in language learning based on the excitement of studying and discussing road rage, would seem to suggest possible solutions to this conundrum.

Zoltan Dornyei is another expert in second language motivation, often cited by researchers in the field. He has proposed theories which seem more complex and nuanced than those of Gardner. His ideas are not restricted by the limits of conscious, rational motivation and he provides many suggestions which can be applied in the L2 classroom (Dornyei, 2001). Dornyei affirms, for instance, that the quality of the curriculum, the material and the learning tasks are some of the 'course specific factors' at play in stimulating language students (Dornyei, 1994, p. 277). Brown

(2007, p. 88) cites Deci (1975) to explain the theory of intrinsic motivation where no external incentive is offered to students, the sole factor being the interest they feel toward a stimulating task which is proposed by the teacher. The influence of positive feelings towards pedagogical material and any other learning tasks, regardless of the discipline, is affirmed by Boekerts in the book, *Comment apprend-on* (Dumont et al., 2010). Assembling all of these findings, one could assume that generating strong emotional reactions might serve to sharpen the concentration of adult learners. An article by Pishghadam et al (2016), which will be referred to frequently in this paper, expresses the important role of emotion in second language learning.

Certain authors have examined how various elements of individual learning assignments can influence student motivation. Barthes (2012) and Lamontagne (2005) have studied the effects of technology use, while Ellis (2009) remarked on the benefits of authentic content and tasks, as well as the advantages of inserting grammar or vocabulary reviews in task-based projects. Brown (2007) explains the necessity of including examples of popular culture, of videos as well as communicative tasks in order to engage the interest of second language learners. Poupore (2014) has set out a number of effective techniques to be used in the conception of any pedagogical activity. These recommendations could, I believe, be applied to the production of pedagogical material as well. The same scholar has also created a questionnaire to be submitted to students for an evaluation of learning tasks completed in class (Poupore, 2014). With certain modifications, this tool could be of use for the evaluation of projects and learning situations which are distributed to students on an individual basis. Poupore's ideas and his survey will be discussed extensively in the next two chapters.

As mentioned above, over the past few years the author of this study has been creating pedagogical material with the goal of stimulating and retaining the interest of adult second language students. Furthermore, as already noted, a colleague who is in contact with ESL teachers from around the province, reported that several of the learning situations created by the author are widely used and appreciated by students in other schoolboards. Following these positive experiences in this domain, there emerged an opportunity to create all the learning material to be used by students throughout the Montérégie region for a new optional course, Current Events, ANG5106. (Later, a decision was taken to extend the use of this material to the

rest of the province.) It therefore seemed pertinent to evaluate the effectiveness of this new material, which has since been completed and is beginning to be implemented. After initiating research in the fields of knowledge related to the subject, there was confirmation on the theoretical level that several key elements of the new pedagogical material correspond to the conclusions and recommendations made by certain scholars in the field. This might lead to the assumption that these learning tasks could serve to heighten the motivation and acquisition of language among students. What remains is to verify if this hypothesis is accurate, to determine whether the included elements have actually contributed to the acquisition of language through stimulating positive emotions and academic motivation.

1.7 Presentation of the specific research objective

For the research portion of this project, it will be necessary to determine whether and how the various aspects of the learning activities conceived for the course ANG5106 serve to motivate adult learners to engage in their academic tasks and to what extent the overall assignments contribute to linguistic acquisition and the development of disciplinary competencies in relation to the aims of the course. It will thus be necessary to analyze the effects of inserting authentic popular culture products and other enticing hooks, significant tasks, grammar reviews, strategies and graphic organizers, the utilization of technology, among other elements, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of these task-based learning projects which were designed to be both stimulating and supportive of L2 acquisition.

1.8 Formulation of the specific research objective

Thus, the precise question to examine will be: Does the pedagogical material devised for the optional ESL course ANG5106 generate positive emotions and stimulate student motivation leading toward heightened linguistic acquisition, as well as the ability to attain the objectives of the course? And if so, how do the students appreciate the role played by the various components of the projects and learning situations? The aim here will be to verify the effectiveness of these learning activities, to improve certain aspects if necessary and to share the results with other adult-level ESL teachers. The ultimate objective will be to identify which strategies in the conception of ESL pedagogical tasks lead to dynamic and effective material for adult L2 learners.

In appendixes A, B and C of this paper, three documents are included which were created for the course ANG5106: the teacher's guide, one project and one learning situation.

SECOND CHAPTER: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

In the theoretical framework of this study, several relevant fields of knowledge will be explored: second language acquisition among adults, L2 academic motivation among adults as well as task-based learning and design recommendations.

As the students for whom the pedagogical material for the course ANG5106 has been conceived are mainly in their late teens and early twenties, we will begin by briefly reviewing the literature on the distinctions between adult and child second language acquisition. According to Ortega (2013) certain common-sense preconceptions and early research conclusions insisted on an optimal age for learners to assimilate a new language. These notions have been subsequently nuanced over the years by a number of authors who have since devoted themselves to this field.

Following this, adult L2 learner motivation will be explored. First, it will be necessary to introduce classic theories on extrinsic Second Language Acquisition (SLA) motivation, as well as more recent efforts to explore intrinsic factors. Then, we will examine how several authors have linked pedagogical material with academic motivation. Finally, recent literature on the emotional impact and educational value of tasks and content on SLA will be discussed.

As Davidson points out in his 2012 Masters thesis, the demographic situation of French and English in Quebec is unusual when compared with many other geographical regions where this issue has been studied. Francophone students here are learning English in a primarily bilingual country within a predominately francophone province. The study of English is generally divided into two categories: ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language). ESL occurs in primarily English-speaking countries, while EFL takes place wherever this is not the case. Officially, learning English in any province in Canada, should be considered ESL since this is Canada's principal language of communication and one of its official languages. Yet, since students in many regions of the province of Quebec have few opportunities to interact in English face-to-face outside of the classroom, their circumstances resemble those of EFL learners elsewhere on the planet. It has therefore seemed appropriate to liberally draw on research

targeting both Second language and Foreign language learners. Considering that the focus here is on pedagogical material and not on classroom interaction, it would appear that this flexibility is warranted and hopefully will not lead to irrelevant or misleading associations and conclusions.

The final field of research which will be examined is task-based learning (TBL) and the design of pedagogical material for use by second language students. Since the material which has been developed for the optional English course ANG5106 is structured along the TBL model, it seems pertinent to review the origins of this approach, in addition to some current studies on its effectiveness. However, L2 tasks are most frequently used in classroom activities and most of the articles which were found for this study refer to this utilization of TBL. It was therefore necessary to try to identify research that seems applicable to individual assignments, not solely to socio-constructivist lessons. In addition, several authors were identified whose work specifically covers the design of task-based learning material, including the development of textbooks.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition Among Adults

As Ortega (2013) points out in her book, *Second Language Acquisition*, the optimal age for learning a second language has been a hotly contested subject for decades. Early research and common sense would suggest that young children should learn faster than others (Ortega, 2013). According to Hakuta et al. (2003) several authors such as Krashen (1973), Lenneberg (1967) and Johnson and Newton (1989) elaborated critical periods for learning an L2 (ranging from ages 5 to 15). However, Ortega (2013) mentions that as early as the 1970's, a number of studies began indicating the opposite to be true. When concentrating their efforts on learning the L2, older adolescents and adults frequently proved capable of surpassing young children (Ortega, 2013). Nevertheless, this advantage was compensated for over time as the younger students eventually absorbed and integrated the new language more completely (Ortega, 2013).

Hakuta et al. (2003) conducted a study on immigrants' mastery of English in a second-language context. The participants, who had come to North America at different ages, were grouped by prior level of education, since this factor is believed to have a direct impact on linguistic ability (Hakuta et al., 2003). The research revealed a gradual decline in language acquisition capability throughout life, rather than a so-called 'critical period' after which there is a sharp drop-off in

language learning capacity (Hakuta et al., 2003). Although not conducted directly in relation to the effects of language courses, these results would tend to favor a certain degree of optimism among teachers of ESL on the adult level. A recent survey at the Lemoyne D'Iberville adult education center found that the majority of students range in age from 16 to 24 (St-Laurent, 2018) and a province-wide study (MELS, 2009, cited in Marcotte, 2012) revealed similar data. Therefore, according to Hakuta's findings, students at adult education centers in Quebec might not experience significantly greater difficulties learning English than would high school students.

Many of the studies on the ideal age for second language acquisition have centered around the ability to achieve near bilingual linguistic levels (Ortega, 2013). This is surely an important measure of success in regions where English is the language commonly used in the community as well as in certain fields of work such as commerce or international diplomacy. However, in the context of the adult education program in Quebec, where students are reattempting to complete their high school English courses, the objective is perhaps less lofty, but just as significant to the individual learner. The question is: How can adults most effectively develop disciplinary competencies and linguistic knowledge in a second language (MÉES, 2015)?

Where adults have a continued advantage over young children, is if the language is being learned only within a classroom context, with few or no additional opportunities to practice the L2 in society as well as with friends (Ortega, 2013). In such cases, adults appear to maintain their superior second language acquisition capabilities, due, once again to their greater capacity to focus on what they are learning. Schmidt's theory of *noticing* could come into play here and shall be discussed further in the section on task-based learning (Schmidt, 1975, cited in Ortega, 2013, p. 95).

Applying these conclusions to the Quebec context is very relevant. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, although Canada is officially a bilingual country, many adults studying throughout the province have few opportunities to use English regularly outside of the classroom (other than on the internet, a widespread recent phenomenon which will be briefly addressed later in this paper). The above-mentioned research would tend to suggest that a motivated adult ESL learner in Quebec should nevertheless be able to make noticeable progress. Much has been written about

the relationship of learner motivation to second language acquisition. We shall therefore examine the question of adult and older adolescent learner motivation in the next section.

2.2 Older adolescent and adult L2 academic motivation

Student motivation is a very broad topic, too broad to be of relevance to this research project. Therefore, it was initially decided to limit the subject to L2 academic motivation. Still, young children have a very different level of cerebral development from older adolescents and adults - the age group targeted for the academic material under study in this paper (Bostina-Bratu & Palea, 2015). This meant that it would be necessary to restrict research principally to the latter two age groups. Moreover, L2 motivational theorists have examined the issue from many angles, including extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, the impact of teaching strategies and interaction styles, as well as the influence of pedagogical materials. Clearly, in order to ensure that this section of the author's research paper is succinct and pertinent, it will be important to try to target, wherever possible, research which touches on the role that pedagogical material plays in L2 motivation among older adolescents and adults. However, the notion of implicit motivation will also be examined as it is closely tied to the central concerns of this study. We will first attempt to paint a broad picture of the theories regarding L2 learner motivation to help provide context, before looking at more specific aspects of this issue.

i General theories

As mentioned earlier in this paper, Robert Gardner posited two dominant factors in the motivation of students of a foreign language: *integrative orientation* and *instrumental orientation* (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, p. 126). Both of these could be viewed as socially conditioned factors (Dornyei, 1994). The first suggests that students may be spurred to learn a second language if they can perceive the value of being able to interact with the L2 community (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). As an aside, it should be mentioned here that in the computer age, this suggestion takes on new meaning; however, for the purposes of this brief overview, we will limit considerations to real-world interaction with the English community. The justification for this is that much of the online interaction engaged in by students in the adult sector does not require the level of English that the Quebec ESL program seeks to develop. While certainly

beneficial for the development of comprehension skills, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine how unsupervised virtual exposure to English contributes to a desire to master the language and disciplinary competencies. Critics are numerous regarding the applicability of the theory of *integrative* motivation, as it is dependant on social context (Davidson, 2012). A francophone L1 group in Quebec City, as mentioned in the first chapter, has proven to be less receptive to the idea of spending time with members of the L2 English community than were the corresponding group in Gardner's study (Davidson, 2012). The reasons given were that they did not wish to lose their linguistic and cultural identity. In such situations, *integrativeness* may therefore prove less effective to the teacher who wishes to heighten his students' enthusiasm to master English (Davidson, 2012).

The second notion, *instrumental* orientation, refers, broadly speaking, to a student's practical reasons for acquiring mastery of the new language (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). As mentioned in the first chapter, this idea also is subject to the perceptions of a particular student or student group, based on their social and economic profile as well as their geographical reality. In a study by Belmechri and Hummel (1998) carried out with another group of students from Quebec City, career objectives did not feature as an important motivating factor for learning English.

Questions surrounding the universal validity of Gardner's conclusions prompted a new generation of L2 motivational theorists to search for novel ideas which could provide a greater range of tools to the language teacher, regardless of their particular teaching context (Dornyei, 1994). Perhaps the most influential successor to Gardner has been Zoltan Dornyei, a Hungarian-born, British-based linguist who has developed a veritable arsenal of levers which the L2 teacher can manipulate in order to help stimulate their students' desire to learn a second language. While expressing his appreciation for the work of Gardner, he pointed out that developments in cognitive psychological theories had, at the time of writing his article, begun to alter the SLA motivational landscape (Dornyei, 1994).

One of the important points that Dornyei (1994) insisted upon was the effectiveness of *implicit* motivational factors (generated from within the student) as a necessary complement to external or *extrinsic* sources of stimulus. At the time of Dornyei's writing, extrinsic approaches (such as the

lure of good grades or the fear of failure) had come under severe criticism. As he mentioned, several studies had concluded that motivational levels often weakened if a student who had experienced implicit motivation were suddenly offered extrinsic reasons to perform well (Dornyei, 1994). The noted linguist cited, in this respect, the work of Deci and Ryan, who had studied how an interest in the classwork itself, with no ulterior reward, could provide a sufficient source of stimulation to the language learner (Dornyei, 1994).

Of course, as Dornyei points out, a number of implicit factors could help to influence the students' level of motivation. Among these are the teaching method, activities and interactive style of the instructor, as well as the relationships with fellow students (or social environment), all of which can be adapted by the teacher in order to accommodate and inspire a particular class (Dornyei, 1994). Of interest for the present project, Dornyei (1994) also mentions the quality of the learning material as an intrinsic factor for student motivation.

Dornyei divides motivational factors related to learning situations into several categories. Those which most directly concern the present study would be *course-specific factors* (the *interest*, *relevance*, *expectancy of success*, and *satisfaction*) attached to course work (Dornyei, 1994, p. 277). In this research project, the focus has primarily been on the interest felt by students toward learning tasks. However, it appears difficult to completely separate the *interest* a student feels for the subject matter from the *expectancy of success*. In other words, the level of difficulty of the texts (which directly influences a student's expectancy of success) must also be well calibrated so that it is neither too easy nor too difficult for the language learner (Dornyei, 1994). This corresponds to Vygotsky's notion of the *zone of proximal development* (Dornyei, 1994).

The scholar suggests, on the subject of motivating students through learning situations, that teachers should "increase the attractiveness of the course content by using authentic materials that are within students' grasp; and unusual and exotic supplementary materials, recordings, and visual aids" (Dornyei, 1994, p. 281). The motivational theorist also recommends student choice of assignments, the use of varied and imaginative tasks as well as clear guidelines and support for correct completion of the tasks (Dornyei, 1994). These suggestions correspond to some of the strategies included in the task-based activities which were conceived for the course ANG5106 and will be corroborated by other authors in the section below concerning task-based learning.

ii Motivation in relation to pedagogical material

A number of second-language scholars have more specifically examined the role and composition of pedagogical material in student motivation. One such author is Poupore (2014) who traces his ideas back to the implicit motivational theories of Deci and Ryan (1985). Poupore asserts that the content of pedagogical material can generate motivation among student learners. He cites Hidi and Bard's (1986) use of the term "*interestingness*" to express this effect (Poupore, 2014, p. 72). Poupore draws on Dornyei's subdivisions of L2 learner motivation to identify *task-related motivation* as his object of study (Poupore, 2014, p. 71). According to Poupore, the subdivisions Dornyei itemizes include: "task content, task structure, expected task outcomes...task participants" (Poupore, 2014, p. 71). He writes: "While a substantial body of TBLT research exists in relation to the influence of task characteristics on linguistic production and cognition (Ellis, 2003; Samuda & Bygate, 2008), relatively little exists in regard to their effect on motivation" (Poupore, 2014, p. 71).

Poupore claims that the content of task-based assignments can have a significant impact on L2 learning. He explains: "Learner interest, therefore, through its tripartite structure of motivation, cognition, and emotion, acts as a key variable in relation to both task motivation and to providing enhanced conditions for more durable learning to take place" (Poupore, 2014, p. 71). We shall return to task-based learning in greater detail in the following section of this chapter. Poupore (2014) goes on to describe the "theory of interest" in relation to L2 acquisition. According to the author, this theory puts forth two types of interest, one *personal* and the other *situational* ((Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Krapp, Hidi, & Renninger, 1992, cited in Poupore, 2014, p. 72). The latter is more universally applicable as it does not merely pertain to the individual passions of a single student, but comprises widely shared sources of stimulus, embedded in learning assignments. This might involve the inclusion of a film or other popular cultural product (Poupore, 2014). This type of group-oriented interest, capable of appealing to many students, is clearly relevant for the creation of broadly distributed learning material, such as that which was designed for those who will be taking the course ANG5106.

Poupore cites Schank, who as early as 1979, identified three principle sources of stimulus for students, in relation to content: that which is strange, texts in which some element is missing and ‘‘absolute interests (e.g. romance, sex, danger, power, death)’’ (Poupore, 2014, p. 72). The pedagogical material designed for ANG5106 has been liberally interspersed with texts (in particular pre-task hooks) that are unusual, surprising, violent, controversial, etc... in order to appeal to students on a primal level. One example is a Joe Jackson video of the song ‘‘Sunday Papers’’, about bizarre tabloid newspaper articles, used as an introduction to the theme of sensationalist journalism.

Once his illuminating preamble is complete, Poupore then describes his own research. Although his study was carried out with Korean adults training to become future teachers of EFL, a certain parallel can be formed with those students who are, or will be, taking the advanced-level optional course, ANG5106: both clienteles have a stronger than average foundation and interest in the English language (Poupore, 2014). The participants in Poupore’s study demonstrated a proclivity for themes which they could personally relate to. A film such as *The Dead Poets Society*, for instance, which deals with an inspiring English teacher, provided an opportunity for them to reflect on their future career (Poupore, 2014).

For Poupore (2014), then, language learners are primarily stimulated by subject matter which is relevant to their lives. Here in Quebec, such assumptions have clearly been present in the elaboration of the current adult education program, in which the broad areas of learning as well as the suggested topics listed in the ESL curriculum are all oriented toward issues that touch students’ lives directly (MÉES, 2015). This is a fundamental principle in the communicative language theory, which is explicitly adopted by those who have developed the new program (MÉES, 2015).

However, one could question whether it is not more advantageous to separate the qualities of a hook, which is specifically designed to appeal on a personal or emotional level to a student, from the ultimate subject of a task. In Poupore’s study, each task was seemingly quite short and appears to have been limited to a narrow discussion about the theme of the film or other cultural product in question. The complex tasks conceived for ANG5106 have the added mandate of enabling students to master particular notions or competencies related to the comprehension as well as the production of journalistic texts. In order to cover the various components of the course

program (including analysis and composition of news, editorials, debates and blogs) these tasks cannot be gutted and simplified, merely in order to attract students' interest. The need to 'cover the program', one would assume, is a necessity in many academic ESL and EFL settings.

Rotgans and Schmidt (2017) carried out a study on the relation of students' interest in academic subject matter which led to counter-intuitive results. They found that students feel increased interest toward a learning task once they begin to acquire knowledge about the subject. This would run contrary to the thesis, proposed by Poupore (2014), that for a student to feel drawn to a learning activity the subject must *a priori* be of interest to them. These findings would lend support to Dornyei's (1994) idea that a combination of ingredients may be at work, contributing to student motivation during a given learning task. In other words, the process of generating enthusiasm among language learners is more complex than simply correctly targeting a subject of interest to one's students. However, wherever possible, presenting students with material content that appeals to them still would appear to represent one of several effective tools for garnering task motivation.

iii Emotional response to academic material

As Poupore (2014) mentions in his study, task content that is of interest to students can bring emotions into play as a factor driving student motivation. This would correspond to the squeal of delight, described earlier, expressed by the student upon realizing that the subject of his next assignment would be road rage.

In SLA literature, much effort has been devoted to studying the negative effects of emotions on language learning ability. Krashen (1985, as cited in, Gass & Selinker, 2008), for instance, suggested that debilitating emotions such as anxiety could block L2 students from benefitting from the effect of input, or exposure to the second language (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012). He referred to this barrier as an '*Affective Filter*' (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012, p. 36). Pishghadam, Zabetipour and Aminzadeh (2016) mention in the theoretical framework of their article that Suggestopedia and other humanistic schools of L2 instruction paid great attention to regulating emotional reactions among students because of just such a risk (Pishghadam et al., 2016).

Pishghadam and et al. (2016) carried out a study on language learners' emotions in relation to L2 skills, the results of which suggested that the participants experienced mainly negative feelings as they carried out the basic functions of reading, writing, listening and speaking, despite the progress that they had achieved in these competencies over the course of their studies. However, these observations are at the opposing end of the spectrum from the enthusiasm that teachers (and designers of learning material) might be expected to try generating through their choice of content and tasks.

The same author, Pishghadam, in 2013, helped develop the theory of *emotioncy*, which stipulates that emotion plays a crucial role in fostering or hindering language learning (Pisghadam & Abbasnejad, 2016). In a study carried out on primary school students, the researchers pay attention to how certain educational choices could impact the feelings of students and how these affective reactions may in turn influence motivation and language acquisition (Pisghadam & Abbasnejad, 2016). Going further, the scholars identify six different levels of emotion generated by a vocabulary word or else an L2 academic activity, ranging from the weakest through the most intense sensation (Pishghadam & Abbasnejad, 2016). The two highest levels are *inner emotioncy*, which involves an activation of all of the senses, and *arch emotioncy*, in which learners research the nuances of meaning attached to a word or subject matter in order to deepen its significance for them (Pishghadam & Abbasnejad, 2016, p. 113).

In yet another study, Pishghadam et al. (2017, p. 527) examine the relationship of reading comprehension to *emotioncy* (a fusion of 'emotion' and 'frequency'), and the state of 'flow', as developed by the psychologist Csikszentmihaly. An indirect causal relation between these three elements was established (Pishghadam et al., 2017). This led the scholar to suggest that EFL teachers and designers of pedagogical material should pay attention to the emotions generated among particular groups of students (Pishghadam et al., 2017). On a large scale, this would point to the need for national or provincial cultural norms and references to be taken into account by educators and publishers (Pishghadam, 2017). He concludes, however, by suggesting that more research be carried out in order to determine how his findings might apply to different academic settings, as well as to students of different genders (Pishghadam et al., 2017).

Maftoon and Sabah (2012), who, like Pishghadam, are scholars at Iranian universities, wrote a thought-provoking paper on the relationship between cognitive and affective responses to SLA learning experiences. Drawing on unfinished work by the educational theorist Vygotsky, the authors claim that more needs to be done to fully appreciate the interconnectedness of mental and emotional experiences in SLA (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012). The article begins with a review of Krashen's notion of affective filters which can diminish a learner's capacity to absorb new material or information. The researchers subsequently examine Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, suggesting that this phenomenon reveals the shared nature of the acquisition of knowledge: it is at once an emotional and a cognitive experience (Maftoon & Sabah, 2012). One implication of this theory might be that teachers and designers of pedagogical material could maintain student levels of motivation during assignments through the use of texts which are at an appropriate degree of complexity for the target clientele, and by the insertion of reviews of vocabulary, grammar and task organization, thus reassuring learners of their ability to succeed. As the effectiveness of learning tasks has frequently been mentioned, in the next section we will take a closer look at Task-based learning.

2.3 Task-Based Learning and Design Recommendations

i. TBL in historical context

In order to situate Task-based learning (TBL) in the progression of L2 educational methods, it would be useful to trace a very brief overview of the movements that preceded its emergence. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the largely static grammar translation method held sway (Brown, 2007). This was originally conceived for use with ancient rather than living languages (Brown, 2007). Over time, various techniques were developed for the study of modern languages. Several of these promoted the application of repetition and memorization of correct linguistic forms, in particular the Audio-lingual method (Harmer, 2001). Eventually this approach was criticized for being too teacher-centered and for being completely removed from the trial and error which is normally involved in the natural acquisition of language (Harmer, 2001).

This form-focused, decontextualized, behaviourist approach gave way to the P.P.P. (Presentation, Practice, Production) method which added meaning, as well as autonomous practice among

students, to the study of grammatical components (Harmer, 2001). The presentation of context, according to Harmer (2001), represented a positive development; however, the P.P.P. method was ultimately considered to be limited to usage with beginning-level students. Harmer (2001, p. 84) developed a variant of this technique which he named E.S.A., for *engage, study and activate*. *Engage*, in this method, would seem to correspond to the ‘hook’ which is necessary to capture a student’s interest in a lesson or individual assignment. *Study* refers to the review of a linguistic concept, and *activate* suggests the use of the object of study in a meaningful task. It would appear that links could be drawn between the tripartite structure of E.S.A. and that of task-based learning which will be discussed further on.

Eventually, the communicative method was formed as a reaction to these various explicit approaches to language teaching (Harmer, 2001). According to Roca (2015), Communicative Language Theory (CLT) emerged in response to methods that were ill-adapted to authentic use of English in society and which were unappealing to many students. Harmer (2001) explains that CLT shifted the language learning experience away from form and towards authentic content and language use. Roca (2015) notes that this approach to L2 learning began to appear in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks in the 1980’s. Harmer (2001) mentions that, although CLT has had a significant impact on second and foreign language teaching, it has also come in for criticism due to the difficulty of ensuring any kind of correct linguistic form, especially among teachers whose first language is not the L2 that they are teaching. Moreover, CLT has proven to be a very broad term, covering a range of practices, all concerned with the application of authentic materials and situations, but without a specifically laid-out structure (Harmer, 2001). Task-based learning developed from the communicative method in the 1980’s (Harmer, 2001).

The underlying principle behind TBL is that language learners make the most progress when they are focused on the content and objective of an activity, rather than on the targeted linguistic elements (Ellis, 2009). To frame it in pedagogical terms, implicit learning is assumed to be more effective than explicit teaching and learning. As Roca (2015) points out, this appears to be the conclusion of publishers of EFL materials over the past few decades, as a majority of activities

printed in textbooks are based on these principles. Task-based learning is also the strategy recommended by the Council of Europe for use in the classroom in order to foster bilingualism (Lorenzo & Moore, 2015).

Although TBL seems to be utilized to a large degree in classroom activities, several authors have dealt with its use in individual assignments. In analyzing the recommendations made by various researchers regarding the most effective elements in task-based assignments, we will occasionally draw on studies carried out in the context of class lessons, wherever it appears that the element in question could equally be utilized in an individual learning situation, to similar effect. The reader might be asked to bear in mind that the individualized learning often carried out in many adult-sector ESL classrooms is unlike much of what goes on in high school and even language academies. Therefore, in order to broaden the range of possible references for the research carried out for this paper, it has frequently been necessary to draw comparisons with studies undertaken in different but related contexts.

ii General theories on TBL ingredients

In terms of the structure of Task-Based Learning, Lorenzo and Moore (2015) explain that, as used in the classroom, it generally consists of three steps: pre-task activities, the task itself and post-task reflections. The pre-task activity could be compared to the hook which has been discussed elsewhere in this paper. Lorenzo and Moore (2015) explain that this first component of a task-based lesson may utilize a variety of methods to draw in the students so that they may be alert and prepared to engage in the task which follows. In the case of the pedagogical material created for the optional course ANG5106, the material itself must act upon the students to generate interest, as most students will be working on their tasks individually, with the teacher intervening only to clarify procedures, engage in oral interaction tasks and provide corrective feedback for oral and written tasks. (In the event that several students in the same multi-level class are simultaneously taking the optional course, ANG5106, it should be noted that several of the assignments may be completed with one or more partners.) Therefore, for the most part, little else other than the subject, tone, medium (whether text, film or music) of the hook can attract the interest of the language learner.

Rod Ellis has written extensively on task-based learning. He explains that TBL is not a rigidly prescribed method but comprises a series of general recommendations, which educators can freely alter (Ellis, 2009). As mentioned earlier, CLT had been criticized for being too radical in removing any focus on the explicit teaching of linguistic forms (Harmer, 2001). One of Ellis' (2009) recurrent recommendations is for teachers to insert linguistic reviews within complex tasks, to ensure that specific grammatical or lexical notions are integrated in the process of completing an assignment or learning activity. However, unlike earlier models of L2 instruction, the language features under review here would be seen by the student as serving a necessary function in order to help them to complete a meaningful task (Ellis, 2009). Ellis therefore upholds the need for explicit instruction as a complement to implicit learning which is dominant in TBL. Support for this belief could be found in Schmidt's (1975) contention that students must 'notice' linguistic concepts in order to be able to assimilate them (Ortega, 2013).

An excellent article by Karaghani (2018), an Iranian linguist, explores the relationship between *noticing*, *attention* and second language acquisition. According to the author, mere exposure to examples of the language (input) is not sufficient to ensure that meaningful learning takes place. Attention on the part of the student is necessary in order to lead to '*intake*' which is a filtered integration of linguistic information (Karaghani, 2018, p. 42). Karaghani (2018) thus, in effect, refutes Krashen's contention that language acquisition takes place almost entirely through input. She affirms that the explicit teaching of grammar is necessary to insure linguistic progress (Karaghani, 2018). By extension, in relation to an issue briefly mentioned earlier in this paper, it could be hypothesized here, that undirected exposure to English over the internet might not guarantee the quality of intake experienced by an individual. Teachers may improve the effectiveness of online language acquisition by guiding their students in terms of what to search for and how to assimilate the information acquired.

iii TBL design recommendations

Jessie Barrot (2014, p. 284), in a paper on the design of pedagogical material in the Asia-Pacific region, argues that published L2 learning assignments need to be based on solid pedagogy, not simply on 'common-sense intuitions', or the outdated PPP method (discussed earlier) which has been the case until recently. The researcher mentions that textbook publishers and all those who

Are involved in producing material for use by L2 teachers should consider employing task-based activities (Barrot, 2014). He also suggests presenting socio-cultural notions as well as genuine social issues (Barrot, 2014). Many of the elements included in the course design for ANG5106 correspond very closely to these recommendations. Such pressing social issues as sexual harassment in the workplace and fake news are addressed in learning situations.

Ozverir et al. (2017) have elaborated 11 principles to promote the design of authentic tasks. As these guidelines are extremely pertinent for the type of pedagogical material conceived for the course ANG5106, they will be listed below in their entirety. According to the authors, authentic L2 tasks:

- have real world relevance
- are complex and ill-defined, requiring students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity over a sustained period of time
- provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources
- provide the opportunity to collaborate
- provide the opportunity to reflect
- lead beyond domain–and skill–specific outcomes
- are seamlessly integrated with assessment
- yield polished products valuable in their own right rather than as preparation for something else
- are open-ended allowing competing solutions and diversity of outcome
- are conducive to both learning and communicating
- provide motivational factors

(Ozverir et al., 2017, p. 270-271).

In a small-scale study carried out in Cyprus, the researchers found that, based on these principles, adult learners developed higher level language and critical thinking skills (Ozverir et al., 2017). A number of these recommendations figure in the composition of the projects and learning situations for ANG5106. For example, all of the subject matter the learning materials touch on is based on real issues that have been covered in the news in recent years; students are provided links and recommendations but are generally free to select their own sources online; there are often provisions for students to work with one or more partners (for example in creating the first

page of a newspaper) where this is possible; finally, students will hopefully learn about the rudiments of journalism and news analysis while deepening their critical thinking skills in relation to important societal problems and phenomena.

2.5 Conclusion

This review of the theoretical and empirical literature has explored the fields of second language acquisition and motivation among adults, including emotional responses to the L2 learning experience. It has also touched on issues concerning task-based learning and the elements necessary for creating effective pedagogical material. Because of the specific nature of this project - combining the development and evaluation of pedagogical material for adult L2 learners - it has often been necessary to consult the work of scholars whose area of expertise is only tangentially related to the object of research of the present study. However, it would appear that the accumulated findings have proven to be extremely rich and pertinent, confirming a number of decisions which were made in designing pedagogical material for the course ANG5106. At the same time, the fact that it has been difficult to find much research directly connected with the design of individual learning activities suggests that this project perhaps contributes in a modest way to the existing research in the field.

While reviewing various texts related to this topic, the author discovered the existence of a number of recent studies (by scholars such as Pisghadam, Maftoon and Karaghani) closely connected with the principal focus of this project - the relationship between emotions generated by strategically designed academic tasks and the acquisition of language. It was intriguing for the author to learn that this innovative branch of L2 research seems to be spearheaded by a group of extremely eloquent scholars, working at universities in Iran, who are perfectly well informed on the most recent world-wide advances in L2- and ESL-related studies. Clearly, educational scholarship and collegiality are capable of crossing regional, cultural and religious boundaries with the common aim of developing new notions and methods to help students deepen their acquisition of a second language. This would suggest that the findings of scholars in L2 research are universal in appeal and perhaps also in applicability.

THIRD CHAPTER: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The objective in the research portion of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the pedagogical material designed for the course ANG5106. In particular, it seemed essential to determine second language learner motivation and language acquisition as influenced by the course material. In order to do so quantitatively, questionnaires were to be distributed to students who have taken the course, whether they were in the author's class or in that of another teacher (since ANG5106 is offered throughout the province, and since, for the moment, the material under study here is the only resource available to teachers and students). Originally, a minimum of ten students was targeted. However, due to various unforeseen circumstances, the number of participants was finally reduced to seven.

In order to deepen the author's appreciation of the effectiveness of the course material, several teacher observations have also been solicited through the use of brief semi-directed interviews. This measure was designed to add qualitative information which could serve to contextualize the quantitative data provided by the student survey. Initially, the author had hoped to talk with three colleagues who had submitted questionnaires to their students. Due to difficulties experienced in various school boards related to beginning the optional course at the start of the semester, only one teacher was found (other than the author of the study) whose students had completed the course. One other teacher who agreed to share her observations had an adult learner enrolled in the course, but this student was not able to complete all of the assignments or the questionnaire before the interview was conducted. A third teacher's involvement was solicited due to her familiarity with the ANG 5106 assignments as well as her long experience constructing ESL pedagogical material in the adult sector.

3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires have been used for many years to determine L2 learner motivation levels. R.C. Gardner, together with Lambert, developed the widely used AMTB (Attitude/motivation test battery) starting in 1958 (Gardner, 1985). The principles and strategies underlying this evaluation tool have been refined and adapted through extensive use in different countries and contexts (Gardner, 1985). Alternative models developed by other researchers have followed suit, and

several of these will be discussed here, as will the questionnaire that was formulated for the present study. However, Gardner's classic evaluation tool represents the point of origin for numerous subsequent surveys (Davidson, 2012). We will therefore begin with a discussion of the AMTB, used for Gardner's study of Canadian anglophone students learning French as an L2 (Gardner, 1985).

3.3 Limits of Gardner's Attitude/motivation test

Comprising over one hundred items, Gardner's test battery presents students with mainly affirmative statements, which participants are called upon to respond to, selecting from a limited range of choices (Gardner, 2004). After an opening example that illustrates the correct manner of answering, students read affirmations which target their feelings about French, the francophone community and their French courses, their level of motivation, their reasons for wanting to learn French as well as their parents' support for the study of French (Gardner, 1985). The seven possible responses to each statement range from: 'strongly disagree', to 'strongly agree' (Gardner, 1985).

Gardner (1985) has randomized his questions to keep students from responding mechanically to similar items. It would seem that this strategy also serves to keep the respondents from guessing the principal object of inquiry of the questionnaire, thus preserving the neutrality of their answers. However, to anyone who is familiar with Gardner's work, it is clear that he is trying to gauge to what extent a student is motivated by factors related to integration with the targeted L2 community, as well as by those in line with possible career qualifications (Gardner, 1985). A third area of interest for Gardner is the influence of the parents' support for learning a second language (Gardner, 1985). Dornyei and Csizer (2011) explain that a minimum of four, but preferably ten or more items should be included in a survey, in order to gather sufficient information for each particular subject of inquiry.

Below are five examples of Gardner's statements regarding feelings about studying French:

1. French Canadians are a very sociable, warm-hearted and creative people.

2. I would like to know more French Canadians.

3. French Canadians add a distinctive flavour to the Canadian culture.

4. English Canadians should make a greater effort to learn the French language.

5. The more I get to know the French Canadians, the more I want to be fluent in their language.

(Gardner, 1985, n.p.)

In the AMTB, there appear to be no pointed comments concerning details of the respondents' L2 course material (Gardner, 2004). This would be due to the very particular nature of Gardner's objectives, and render his survey less suited to the present study which is designed to assess the effects of learning tasks on student motivation. In addition, there are, from all appearances, no items which would directly reveal any information about the students' prior experiences with the language, apart from the statements regarding personal and parental attitudes toward the second language. You and Dornyei's (2013) questionnaire, on the other hand, seeks information on participants' prior experiences in English-speaking contexts. Csizer and Dornyei (2011) point out that prolonged stays in an L2 context have been proven to influence students' attitudes toward the target language.

3.3 Dornyei's development of the motivation survey model

Zoltan Dornyei wrote a chapter of a book with Kata Csizer on the subject of creating L2 motivation questionnaires (2011) which was exceedingly instructive in determining how to approach the methodological aspect of the present study. The noted expert on language learner motivation has created a variety of surveys for use in his academic studies around the world. His experiences in this domain began with data collection in his home country of Hungary. As the two scholars mention, researchers must rework numerous elements of a questionnaire before using it in another international context (Dornyei & Csizer, 2011).

In a questionnaire distributed to a group of Chinese students, Dornyei attempts to gather information about the students' profiles, (for background information), while aiming to learn how the participants project an image of their own use of L2 into the future (You & Dornyei, 2013). Dornyei's questionnaire would thus seemingly be designed to assess how well his theory of L2

motivation holds up in the case of this particular group of students. However, You and Dornyei (2013) are also searching for data concerning how much students are motivated by parental or peer expectations, compared with their own intrinsic reasons. Like Gardner, he randomizes the order of his items. Because of this, as well as his use of affirmative statements, his survey seems to reflect the heritage of Gardner. Dornyei, however, adds questions regarding students' background information. He adds these at the end of the survey, since he explains that placing such questions at the beginning might cause some participants to worry about personal privacy issues (Dornyei & Csizer, 2011).

Here are some of You and Dornyei's (2013) statements from this survey, which students respond to by selecting a number from one through six, corresponding to 'I strongly disagree' for 1 and 'I strongly agree' for 6:

1. *Learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally.*
2. *I like English films.*
3. *My parents/family believe that I must study English to be an educated person.*
4. *Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of the (sic) society.*
5. *Studying English can be important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies.*
6. *I always look forward to English classes.*
7. *I think learning English is important in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers.*
8. *Studying English is important to me because I am planning to study abroad.*
9. *I can imagine myself speaking English in the future with foreign friends at parties.*
10. *I have to study English, because, otherwise, I think my parents will be disappointed with me.*

(You & Dörnyei, 2013, n.p.)

3.4 Poupore's questionnaire concerning task material

Poupore (2014) carried out a survey with Korean students in a program leading to qualification for EFL teachers. He created a questionnaire to measure students' motivational levels in

connection with task material. His objectives are the most closely related to those of the present study. We have therefore used several of his questions as a starting point for the survey of students who have taken ANG5106, although we have employed affirmative statements rather than interrogative sentences. In order to respect the time constraints of the adult learners, we have limited the survey to a single post-task questionnaire, unlike Poupore (2014) who was also able to conduct interviews with a number of students to gather additional information. Due to this limitation, the present survey ends with a series of questions designed to provide additional information on students' previous experiences with English, and, after the conclusion of the student consultation, several participating teachers have been interviewed.

Below are the post-task questions Poupore lists in his 2014 article, which students respond to, using a scale ranging from one to five:

Motivational Variables on the Post-Task Motivation Questionnaire:

Task enjoyment (3)

How interesting did you find this task?

How enjoyable did you find this task?

How did you like the topic of this task?

Reported effort (3)

How much focused attention did you give while doing this task?

How much did you persist working on the task?

How much effort did you put into this task?

Result assessment (2)

How well did you do this task?

If you could grade yourself for this task, what sort of grade would you give yourself in comparison to the rest of your classmates?

Perceived relevance (1)

How useful do you consider this type of task for your language learning?

(Poupore, 2014, p. 75)

3.5 The Questionnaire for the Present Study

The items for this study can be separated into three sections: student reactions to the pedagogical material in ANG5106, student feelings about English and expectations for the course prior to beginning it, as well as background information about the student. For the reasons mentioned earlier, we have also randomized items in the first two sections before distributing them to students. Comparing the affirmative statements in Gardner's and Dornyei's surveys to the open questions used in Poupore's, the former constructions would appear to be preferable. As Dornyei mentions in the essay he co-authored with Csizer (2011), students generally feel at ease agreeing or disagreeing with affirmative statements, experiencing very little confusion.

The concluding questions of this survey solicit basic student background information, in particular establishing to what extent the student has been exposed to English prior to taking this course. These are modified from You and Dornyei's survey (2013).

We have added other student background questions which are adapted to the reality of adult learners in a Quebec context. It should be noted that all of the items have been translated into French so that students can respond to a survey in the language of their choice. Dornyei and Csizer (2011) have suggested that such surveys should be completed in the first language of the participant.

Before beginning to formulate the questions for this survey, it seemed worthwhile to follow the recommendation of Dornyei and Csizer (2011) to engage in an exploratory dialogue with one of the students who fit the profile of those who would complete the finished questionnaire.

Therefore, the author spoke with an adult learner who had completed a number of assignments in ANG5106, asking questions related to the objectives of this study. The reactions of the student to the coursework were very helpful in deciding which avenues of questioning to pursue in the survey. In particular, the author observed the student's reluctance to express emotions openly.

This led the author to formulate statements in a more neutral manner, using words such as *interest* and *appreciation* rather than such terms as *like* and *enjoyable*, which were employed in Poupore's study (Poupore, 2014, p. 75).

In appendix A on page 43, the reader will find a list of items comprising the author's questionnaire. These were to be responded to by students using a six-point scale ranging from '*Strongly disagree*' to '*Strongly agree*', as in You and Dornyei's model (2013, n.p.).

A randomized version of the statements has been prepared for the students, along with a French translation for those who are more comfortable responding in their first language. The English and French versions of the study distributed to students are printed below in appendixes E and F, respectively. This provision follows the recommendations of Dornyei and Csizer (2011). The English version of the questionnaire was submitted to a student who is currently taking the course, based on the guidelines of the same authors (Dornyei & Csizer, 2011). As the student was able to complete the survey with no assistance on the part of the author, and as the students' responses seemed coherent and authentic, the items in the questionnaire appeared to be adequate to serve as the basis for the quantitative data collection in the Fall of 2019.

3.6 Semi-directed interviews

In order to provide an additional perspective on students' engagement with the course material for ANG5106, it was decided that semi-directed interviews would be conducted with several teachers who had reviewed the material or whose students would complete the questionnaire for this study. In a study by Perron (2018) using a quantitative survey to establish a causal relationship between teaching methods of science instructors and their students' mastery of a particular scientific method, the researcher used semi-directed interviews with certain teachers as a complement to the questionnaires she had distributed to a greater number of participants. The qualitative information garnered from these interviews helped to provide additional context for the data amassed through the scholar's initial survey.

In the present study, the questionnaires have been completed by students, while a small number of teachers were questioned in order to determine their observations of student motivation and language acquisition or their evaluation of the material. The ESL instructors' responses proved

helpful in validating or qualifying the primary data provided by the students. As Perron (2018) suggests, we determined what questions to ask in the interviews once the data had been collected from the initial survey. These questions are included in Appendix H and I on pages 111 and 112.

3.7 Ethical considerations of the study

Contacting potential student candidates to complete this survey began with a request for teacher participation. The author of this study had two students registered in this optional ESL class in the Fall of 2019, while a colleague in the same school, and who agreed to collaborate, had seven, five of whom completed the course in time to participate. No other ESL teachers in other adult centres were able to submit the questionnaire considering the rhythm at which their students worked and the author's time constraints. As the pedagogical material conceived for ANG5106 is now available for students in schoolboards throughout the province, a request was also made for ESL teachers with students registered in this course to contact the author. This was carried out via the adult-level ESL website, *eslquebec.wixsite.com*, mentioned earlier in this paper.

To ensure that students would fill out the questionnaire of their own accord and not due to pressure from a teacher, a consent form was submitted prior to the distribution of the survey (see appendix G). The submission of such a document to each participant is considered sufficient for the conducting of academic surveys in the adult sector of the Marie-Victorin school board. The form mentions, among other points, that students' grades will not be affected in any way by their answers on the questionnaire, in particular because their responses will remain anonymous. In addition, participants may withdraw from the study at any moment, even after having signed the consent form.

3.8 Scope and time-frame of the research

The estimated scale and schedule of this study have been somewhat contingent on the number of students who were registered for this new course and who were willing to complete the questionnaire, as well as on the length of time required for them to complete the coursework. The estimated date to collect the last student survey was November 15. Since this is a new optional course with not many students registered, there were no constraints on student participation based on gender or other criteria.

As for the semi-directed teacher interviews, three ESL colleagues were involved, one of whom had already been confirmed at the date of writing. As suggested earlier, the precise nature of the questions to be posed in these encounters was determined by the results of the student survey. Therefore, the teacher interviews had to take place in late November, shortly after the final questionnaires would be completed.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The author readily acknowledges the existence of numerous imperfections in the nature of this study. As mentioned above, gender equality could not be guaranteed due to the limited number of students eligible to participate. However, the course material in question might very well appeal to students of one sex more than the other, which might mean that the present study's conclusions are somewhat misleading. The age factor might have also influenced the results, as a significant number of participants were between eighteen and twenty years old, and therefore perhaps less objective than more mature adult learners. In addition, seven is an extremely small number of participants, which might limit the value of the results. As well, since the survey was submitted to students in the classroom, students might have wished to please their teacher. In order to reduce the effects of such sentiments, it was determined that the questionnaire would only be completed by participants once they had completed the course. Finally, since students who filled out the survey did so on a volunteer basis, it is possible that their initial attitude might have been favorable toward the course material in question. Perron (2018) has suggested that volunteer participants in surveys are generally considered to have a positive inclination toward the question being examined. This same limitation might be thought to hold perhaps to an even greater extent when it comes to ESL colleagues who agree to participate in semi-directed interviews.

3.10 Hypothesis of survey results

Although it was essential to maintain strict neutrality while conducting this study, responses to similarly crafted pedagogical material by the author in recent years suggested that adult learners might feel favorably toward the assignments in ANG5106, thus heightening motivation as well as language acquisition. However, due to the young age of many of those who would be completing the questionnaire, it appeared possible that some of the topics and films chosen for the course as

well as certain tasks designed for the projects and learning situations might miss the mark and leave some participants somewhat indifferent.

3.11 Conclusions

To summarize the methodological aspect of this study, a quantitative survey in the form of a questionnaire was conducted with students who had completed the course ANG5106, using elements from Dornyei's and Poupore's models. The objectives of this research have been to try to establish the level of interest these adult learners experienced while working on the assignments created for the course as well as their level of motivation, in addition to which elements of the pedagogical material were most appreciated. Furthermore, we have attempted to determine if a causal relation might be established between enthusiasm and possible ensuing motivation toward the coursework, along with progress in disciplinary competencies and the acquisition of linguistic knowledge.

In order to ensure that the adult learners' responses might be understood more objectively, following the model of Perron's (2018) study of science instructors, semi-directed interviews were projected to be carried out with several teachers whose students would be participants in the study. As noted above, this provision was slightly modified to include a teacher whose student hadn't yet completed the course or the survey and another colleague who had no students registered in the course but who had studied the material and was well qualified to assess adult level ESL pedagogical material.

FOURTH CHAPTER: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study, as explained in previous chapters, is based on the hypothesis that emotions generated by task-based ESL learning material incorporating intriguing current news topics can generate motivation among adult learners, thus leading to increased linguistic acquisition and the development of disciplinary competencies. The author's theory has been tested on a small sampling of students, the first to have completed the material he had created for an optional English course, ANG5106, *Current Events*. Once finished the course work, these adult learners were asked to complete a short questionnaire which was collected and analyzed afterward by the author of the study. The findings thus gathered have then been further validated and contextualized through the use of semi-directed interviews conducted with teachers who have been involved in the administration of the course material and/or the survey, or else who are familiar with the assignments and have expertise in the domain of ESL learning situation development.

4.1 Information on the survey population

The students who participated in the study are all registered in the adult sector, most of them in the C.A.P. program at Lemoyne-D'Iberville Adult Education Center in Longueuil. This program is comprised of students from 16 to 20 years old. Other learners who completed the optional course as well as the questionnaire are in the regular program at the Lemoyne D'Iberville Center and are in their twenties and thirties. At the time of collecting the data, just seven students had been able to complete the survey. In order to confirm and augment the findings gathered from this small sampling, the author met with the teacher of the group of younger students and carried out a semi-directed interview. One other ESL colleague whose student was in the process of completing the tasks for ANG5106 also participated in a semi-directed interview. Although this adult learner did not have time to complete the course or the questionnaire by the time of the conclusion of the data-gathering period, she had progressed in the course significantly enough for her teacher to be able to make informed observations on her level of interest and motivation. A third colleague, who has expertise in creating pedagogical material, also responded to questions.

It should be noted from the outset that this optional course is only open to students who have completed all of their required ESL courses in secondary five and who feel confident enough in their English abilities to try to obtain additional credits by taking an advanced-level course in this subject. This must be taken into consideration when evaluating the effects of the pedagogical material in ANG5106 on the study participants. However, a number of questions in the survey are designed to help distinguish between a subject's general abilities and interest in English, their previous level of motivation in other English courses and the effects of the present material on their levels of motivation and language acquisition.

4.2 Analysis

Student responses

The students who responded to the questionnaire after completing ANG5106 were, as mentioned previously, seven in total. Of those, five were between the ages of 18 and 20, while two others were aged 26 and 34. The younger students were in a fellow ESL teacher's class while the two older participants were in the author's own classroom. Five of the respondents were women and two were men. They filled out the survey in their classroom and the data was collected in mid-November.

As expected, considering that ANG5106 is an advanced-level optional course, in the personal information section of the survey, many of the students mentioned that they had had several extra-mural life experiences in English. Three students had spent at least three months in an English-speaking setting for work or personal reasons. The same three students, as well as one other study participant, also used English frequently with family and/or friends, as well as at work and even to a certain degree in their neighborhoods. Among the other students, two others used English at work and one of these also used the language in her neighborhood. Three students never used English with their family or friends and only one did not use or had not recently used English at work. This last person was the only one who rarely used English outside of school.

Data from teacher interviews

Regarding the semi-directed interviews, the colleague who had five of the seven participants in his class, referred to here as teacher A, was a willing collaborator.

In addition, one other teacher who had a single student registered in the optional course, teacher B, was able to offer valuable observations on her student's response to the first few assignments of ANG5106 through an interview. Although this young person was not able to complete the course and the survey this Fall, teacher B's remarks were nevertheless exceedingly helpful to the author.

A third colleague, teacher C, also agreed to participate in an interview. Although teacher C had reviewed the assignments for ANG5106, she had decided to wait before registering any of her adult learners in the course since the guidelines for the examination domain had not yet been laid out by the Ministry of Education. However, as teacher C has a great deal of experience creating pedagogical material for this age group, the author requested her participation as an interviewee, a request to which she kindly agreed.

TABLE 4.1

CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE GROUP

Number of participants	7
Age of participants	5 students: 18-20 1 student: 26 1 student: 34
Gender of participants	5 women, 2 men
3-month or longer in English-speaking area	3 students
Speaks with family in English	4 students
Speaks with friends in English	4 students
Speaks English in neighborhood	5 students
Speaks English at work	6 students
Positive feelings toward learning English	6 students strongly agreed 1 student moderately agreed

4.2.1 Emotional response to material for ANG5106

Student responses

In contrast to Poupore's mature Korean students, affirming one's positive (or negative) feelings toward an academic course in a survey might not necessarily be a simple matter for young adults in an adult education centre in Quebec, due to feelings of pride, embarrassment or other inhibitions (Poupore, 2014). In light of this, no questions in the present study made direct reference to students' feelings about the assignments. This was not an oversight, it simply seemed to the author that students might be reluctant to discuss their enthusiasm for assignments, while *interest* and *appreciation* appeared to be more acceptable experiences to admit. The student responses to such questions are noted in the section 4.2.2 on student appreciation of different elements of ANG5106 material. These sentiments were pertinent in developing a sense of how students responded to the course material, while the teacher interviews served to confirm or complete the portrait.

Reviewing the interest level among students towards the assignments in 5106 compared with those in other secondary five courses, four students were strongly in agreement that their interest was greater, one student was moderately in agreement (5 out of 6) while the two others were slightly in agreement or in disagreement.

Data from teacher interviews

As teachers were called on to interact frequently with students while they completed the tasks, it was thought that they might be able to objectively assess the reactions of students to various themes, tasks and audio or written texts. The two teachers whose students had either begun or completed the course in fact related that these learners had been particularly moved by certain subjects that touched them personally. In one class it was the subjects of sexual harassment (dealt with in one of the learning situations) and abuse (which was the subject of the film *Spotlight*) that triggered emotional responses, in addition to the choice of terrorism as an example of hard news in project one. Another teacher remarked that it was the opportunity for her student to select her own news topics which generated a positive emotional response. In particular, living in the Beauce region where major floods had severely affected life in the area in recent months, the

student in question elected to read and analyze news reports about this subject. A third teacher had merely shown (but not yet assigned) the material to a strong potential candidate for the course in her class. She related that this student, who would like to be a sports journalist, was extremely excited about the material in general and the project on sports reporting in particular.

4.2.2 Appreciation of different elements of ANG5106 material

Student responses

In the survey, several statements are included which refer to the various aspects of the ANG5106 assignments. There is one pertaining to the hooks (films, videos and other texts meant to capture students' interest at the start of each project or L.S.), two dealing with the grammar reviews or related supporting cognitive material, and others touching on the subject matter as well as the latitude for students to select their own articles in most of the assignments.

Beginning with the item about the hooks at the start of each assignment, five students out of seven were strongly in agreement that they appreciated this element, one student was moderately in agreement while one student was slightly in disagreement.

With regard to the grammar capsules in the first four projects, one statement in the questionnaire affirmed that these helped to develop their ability to write and speak English correctly. Three participants strongly agreed with this affirmation, three others were moderately in agreement while one person was slightly in agreement. These results are interesting because even students who found the assignments easy or who indicated that they use English frequently outside of school were in agreement.

Another statement covers very similar terrain. Here, the grammar capsules, notes organizers and other supporting information integrated into the projects are said to help the participant to complete the tasks for ANG5106. Four students were strongly in agreement with this, while one was moderately in agreement and two others were slightly in agreement. Once again, even students who found the tasks exceedingly easy had responded in the affirmative to this statement.

The statement regarding appreciation of the subject matter for the material in ANG5106 solicited three responses strongly in agreement and four others moderately in agreement. Respecting the

item about appreciating the opportunity to select one's own subjects or articles in certain tasks there was almost unanimity: six of the seven participants strongly agreed while one moderately agreed with this affirmation.

Data from teacher interviews

As suggested earlier, during the semi-directed teacher interviews, it was possible to obtain specific observations concerning which aspects of the tasks appealed most to students and which elements had the contrary effect. This invaluable material has enabled the author to take note of which assignments should perhaps be reworked.

Teacher A, whose students made up the bulk of those who have completed both the course and the survey, mentioned that the film *Spotlight*, recommended at the start of project two, was appreciated by all of his students, while the second option, *All the President's Men* was considered complex, outdated and boring. The same criticism was expressed by most of his students regarding the George Clooney film *Goodnight and Good Luck* which portrays the life of the noted American journalist Edward R. Murrow, and which was included in a project on editorial journalism. As mentioned elsewhere, teacher A's students were quite stimulated by articles on terrorism in the first project comparing hard and soft news.

In addition, he noticed that his students found the writing task in project five too similar to that in project three. The intention of the author had been to reinforce the students' ability to write articles, a competency crucial to the completion of the course. However, the students did not appreciate the redundancy of the task. On the other hand, teacher A noted that project seven, which deals with sports reporting, was quite popular. In the teacher's guide this project was listed as the alternative to project five which teacher A's students had appreciated less.

Teacher C surmised that adult learners might greatly appreciate the first four projects which represent in her eyes, a veritable introduction to journalism. She also remarked on the intriguing task involved in the learning situation concerning amateur versus professional journalists, in which students may select to play the role of a news editor or a young amateur journalist. As for the grammar reviews, she was very appreciative of the manner in which they were integrated in a logical, unobtrusive manner into each of the first four projects.

4.2.3 Level of student motivation for the assignments in ANG5106

Student responses

In the category of motivation, students were quite forthcoming. Before divulging the findings for this important factor, it is necessary to review certain characteristics of the study group with regard to their English abilities and underlying attitude toward studying or using the language.

As mentioned earlier, in the section of the survey on personal information, most of the participants revealed using English in some aspect of their lives, while a few mentioned using it at home or with friends on a regular basis. Therefore, it was not surprising that for most of those who completed the questionnaire, the material designed for an English as a Second Language course – albeit an advanced level course - might not be considered challenging. Only two students were slightly in agreement that the assignments presented any difficulty for them. This would differ greatly from the experience of many students on other levels of the ESL program. The low level of challenge noted by participants might be expected to affect their degree of motivation, as one might expect stronger students to be stimulated by somewhat challenging tasks. This would correspond to the experience of Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development as discussed in terms of language learning by Dornyei (1994). Curiously, as noted below, the correspondence between the degree of challenge and the degree of motivation was not necessarily reflected in students' responses to statements concerning their level of motivation toward the assignments.

It should also be noted that all students expressed positive feelings toward doing at least some activities in English, including studying the language. As well, a number of students responded that they were already motivated while completing the other secondary five courses prior to ANG5106. Six of the seven students were strongly in agreement with the statement that they had always appreciated the process of learning English, while the other participant was moderately in agreement.

Certain inconsistencies in student responses should also be mentioned. One eighteen-year-old student expressed less enthusiasm than all other participants in the survey, including only a slight level of motivation for both the other secondary five courses and ANG5106. However, in

responding to a statement regarding her level of interest in the assignments for the new course compared with those for ANG5101, 5102 and 5102, she marked six (the highest level) in favor of the new learning tasks. The same student also indicated 5 out of 6 for her level of appreciation of the subjects selected for the assignments in 5106.

As for the augmentation of all of the students' motivation generated by the assignments in the new course, three students agreed strongly, one moderately, two were slightly in agreement and one student was slightly in disagreement. This last participant mentioned in the margin that he was already motivated in English before taking the course.

Data from teacher interviews

In the teacher interviews it emerged that all students were fairly motivated in their approach toward ANG5106 for the practical reason that they needed the extra credits in order to graduate. This would correspond to the notion of extrinsic sources of motivation which Dornyei (1994), among others, had contrasted with intrinsic sources. Despite this importance accorded to the assignments in ANG5106 for reasons beyond the scope of pedagogical considerations, it could still be considered edifying to examine other aspects of student motivation.

Teacher A emphasized external motivating factors such as credits toward completing a high school diploma when speaking about students' overall level of motivation toward the material. However, as will be mentioned in other categories of results, several of his students also indicated that they were motivated by particular elements or subjects of various assignments.

The ESL colleague teacher B, who had one student registered in the course, found that this adult learner was quite motivated to do the projects, partly due to the credits she would accumulate, but also due to the possibility of selecting her own subjects, news sources and articles. Teacher C corroborated the idea that the freedom to select one's news topics from such a wide variety of suggested news sources should logically heighten student motivation among those enrolled in this course. She found this flexibility, including the option of choosing from among different assignments, to be an extremely important component, one which is often lacking in learning material for young adults.

4.2.4 Effects of ANG5106 material on student learning

Student responses

As mentioned above, students who completed the questionnaire were almost unanimous in appreciating the beneficial effects of the grammar capsules in the first four projects. However, a number of other items referred to the development of vocabulary, of writing skills, as well as other competencies.

With respect to development of vocabulary, four students were strongly in agreement that the assignments in ANG5106 were useful in developing their English lexicon, while two others were moderately in agreement and one slightly so.

As for the contribution of these tasks to their ability to speak and write correctly in English, three students strongly agreed with this item, three others were moderately in agreement and one other was slightly in agreement.

Another statement concerns the usefulness of content and tasks in ANG5106 for the development of comprehension skills. Here, four students were strongly in agreement, two were moderately in agreement while one was moderately in disagreement.

Other items in the survey were designed to determine how useful the tasks were in preparing students for the skills targeted in the ANG5106 program, as well as for the summative evaluation. One statement dealt with the effectiveness of the tasks to help the student write articles, another addressed the degree to which they prepare the student for the exam, a third statement explored the efficacy of the assignments for developing the ability to produce audio or video reports, while a fourth item concerned the extent to which the material was useful in augmenting the capacity to understand and discuss news reports.

Beginning with the statement regarding the ability to write news articles, four students were strongly in agreement that the tasks helped them to develop this skill while three others were moderately in agreement.

As for the item concerning the degree to which the tasks helped students prepare for the exam, the results differed slightly more. Five students agreed strongly while one agreed slightly and one other disagreed moderately.

The next statement which dealt with the development of the ability to produce audio or video news reports led to results which were difficult to comprehend. None of the participating students had taken up the optional challenge of producing audio or video reports. Logically, therefore, most students should have been strongly or else moderately in disagreement. However, the results showed that only three students revealed such reactions while the other students were slightly, moderately or strongly in agreement. These reactions might call into question the authenticity of certain students' responses to other statements.

Finally, five students responded that they strongly agreed that the assignments helped them to develop their ability to comprehend and discuss current events, while two others were in moderate agreement.

Data from teacher interviews

Concerning the students' ability to integrate correct grammar into their writing, teacher A mentioned that students' motivation to complete the writing tasks on subjects of interest to them was beneficial.

With regard to comprehension skills which form the essence of ESL disciplinary competency two - *reinvesting comprehension of texts*- teacher B remarked that her student seemed to expand her abilities in this sphere through her interest in reading the various articles which she had selected.

The experienced designer of academic material, teacher C, believed that the appropriateness and usefulness of the grammar reviews included in the first four projects should lead to genuine student linguistic development. She compared these brief pertinent reviews to the lengthy grammar 'asides' that can become very onerous in certain learning assignments found in textbooks, for example. Finally, it is her belief that the amount and variety of reading involved in this course, could enable students to take a great step forward in reading comprehension.

4.3 Summary of major findings

TABLE 4.2
SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

CATEGORY FROM SURVEY	STUDENT RESPONSES	DATA FROM INTERVIEWS
Interest in assignments for ANG5106	Greater interest compared with other secondary five courses: 4 students strongly agreed 1 student moderately agreed 1 student slightly agreed 1 student slightly disagreed	Specific details of teacher observations noted in the next section. Teacher C: Student who wants to be a journalist was excited by the assignments.
Appreciation of different elements of ANG5106 material	Appreciation of 'hooks' in assignments: 5 students strongly in agreement 1 student moderately in agreement 1 student slightly in disagreement Appreciation of subject matter of assignments: 3 students strongly agreed 4 students moderately agreed Appreciation of flexibility in choosing material and subjects: 6 students agreed strongly 1 agreed moderately	Teacher A: -Students very interested in film <i>Spotlight</i> . -Students not interested in films, <i>All the President's Men</i> and <i>Good Night and Good Luck</i> . -Students stimulated by articles on terrorism in project one. -Students bored by project five since task is similar to project 3. -Project 7 on sports reporting is a popular alternative. Teacher B: -Student was excited by possibility of choosing her own articles in project one. Teacher C: -Potential student seemed excited by project on sports journalism. -Teacher appreciates projects one through four as an introduction to journalism. -Teacher appreciates task in learning situation on amateur vs. professional journalism.
Level of student motivation for the assignments in ANG5106	Increase in student motivation compared with other secondary five ESL courses: 3 students strongly agreed 1 student moderately agreed 2 students slightly agreed 1 student slightly disagreed (noting he was already motivated before)	Teacher A: Most students motivated due to credits for the course. Teacher B: Motivation due to credits and possibility of selecting assignments, subjects and articles.

		Teacher C: Flexibility and choice should generate motivation.
Effects of ANG5106 material on student learning	<p>Grammar capsules helped student to write and speak correctly: 3 students agreed strongly 3 students agreed moderately 1 student agreed slightly</p> <p>Linguistic and other support helped student to complete tasks: 4 students strongly agreed 1 student moderately agreed 2 students slightly agreed</p> <p>Assignments helped develop vocabulary: 4 students strongly agreed 2 students moderately agreed 1 student slightly agreed</p> <p>The tasks helped students to write and speak correctly: 3 students strongly agreed 3 students moderately agreed 1 student moderately agreed</p> <p>Contents and tasks were useful to develop comprehension skills: 4 students strongly agreed 2 students moderately agreed 1 student moderately disagreed</p> <p>Tasks helped student to write news articles: 4 students strongly agreed 3 students moderately agreed</p> <p>Tasks helped student prepare for exam: 5 students agreed strongly 1 student agreed slightly 1 student disagreed moderately</p> <p>Assignments helped develop ability to comprehend and discuss current events: 5 students agreed strongly 2 students agreed moderately</p> <p>Tasks were useful to develop ability to produce audio or video reports: 2 students agreed strongly</p>	<p>Teacher A: Students seemed to integrate grammar into writing through motivation to carry out learning tasks.</p> <p>Teacher B: Student developed reading comprehension through motivation to read interesting articles.</p> <p>Teacher C: The relevant and well-integrated grammar capsules should favor student linguistic development. The variety and volume of texts to be read should greatly develop student reading comprehension skills.</p>

	1 student agreed moderately 1 student agreed slightly 1 studently disagreed moderately 2 students disagreed strongly	
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Student responses

The research portion of this study has combined quantitative and qualitative data in order to establish a reliable portrait of student response to the assignments in ANG5106 and how such reactions may have influenced motivation as well as acquisition of linguistic knowledge and disciplinary competencies. Through the use of student questionnaires and semi-directed teacher interviews, there appears to be overall confirmation of the hypothesis of the causal relationship enumerated above. If this cannot be proven without hesitation, then at least it can be established that appreciation toward and motivation for the material were experienced parallel to an increased aptitude in language abilities required for the course.

Although there was a certain amount of ambiguity in the students' responses, it would seem that students who completed the new optional course appreciated or were interested in at least certain aspects of the learning material. Most students indicated that their degree of motivation was greater for this course than for the previous secondary five courses, while none found that it had diminished. Students appreciated various aspects of the material, in particular the ability to choose their own subjects and articles.

As for the effect on their learning, the students indicated in responding to the survey that the material helped them to develop English knowledge and skills, along with the particular competencies which were necessary for the successful completion of the course.

Data from teacher interviews

It was in the teacher interviews that a connection between student motivation and L2 acquisition could be explored from an external perspective. The first interview with teacher A was inconclusive in this respect, as he mentioned that his students' English level was quite high even before beginning the course. He noticed only an improvement of grammar skills through the multiple writing assignments, possibly due to students' interest in the topics they had chosen to

write about. However, teacher B remarked that her student significantly improved her comprehension skills through her enthusiastic efforts to read a variety of news articles. Teacher C, without having had any of her students actually take the course, indicated that the well-integrated nature of the linguistic and cognitive supports within the assignments should logically maintain student motivation and lead to improved language learning.

4.4 Proposed changes to material

Bearing in mind this was the first semester when students were actually completing these assignments, inevitably certain adjustments would need to be made as a result of student reactions combined with teacher observations and recommendations. As there was a specific question in the teacher interviews about recommended changes to the material and since teachers are perhaps best able to determine what has or has not been properly adapted to the needs or interests of the adult learners, we shall rely primarily on those exchanges for reference here.

Teacher A believed that for his students there appeared to be an excessive concentration on reading and writing news articles. Due to the very nature of the course (an introduction to analysis and production of journalistic texts), it might not be possible to effect major modifications in this respect. He also suggested listening to or watching a few audio or video reports in order to vary the students' experience, a recommendation which could easily be carried out. In addition, he noted that no students opted to work with partners, so perhaps this measure could be removed. As students vary greatly in terms of their inclinations, it would appear wise to maintain the option of student collaboration in case students in the future in another setting might choose to work in teams. With regards to his students' negative reactions to several of the older movies included in the projects these films might be replaced with ones that are better adapted to the age group of our adult learners. However, as the sample of the present study is so small, it might be once again better to wait and observe how students in future cohorts respond to these films before making a decision.

During the interview with teacher B, this colleague suggested to perhaps add a connection between news reporting in the past compared with today. Perhaps the George Clooney film in the project on editorials might be eventually replaced by a brief overview of the development of

editorial journalism. Other than that, teacher B was very pleased with the material in its present form.

Since teacher C had not yet had any of her students complete the assignments, she could not base her recommendations on observations of adult learners. Nevertheless, she mentioned that she was curious to see how her students would deal with the autonomy involved in this course. They must read articles or watch films and then summarize the information in charts. From her experience, weaker students tend to struggle with completing such tables, but not strong ones. Since the students who register for this advanced level optional course would most probably be fairly competent in English, this might not pose any difficulties. Along the same lines, she wondered how students in her adult education centre might deal with the native English language phrasing, including authentic expressions which are utilized in the explanations and instructions. From her experience working at the ministry of Education, she estimated that the level of difficulty of English used for this course was above the current language benchmark being used for secondary five ESL courses for adults. Teacher C did not suggest that this was something to be changed, she merely expressed curiosity as to how her students who live in the Quebec City region would be able to comprehend the language used for the course. Once again, considering the high level of English among likely candidates for such an optional course, she surmised that it could represent a worthy challenge. In addition, she suggested that the teacher's guide could include specific information on how to procure the films recommended for the course as they are not readily available online. For the most part she opined that the projects are well structured to facilitate student development in the course objectives, while the learning situations are very creative. Her overall assessment was that the material for this course is extremely comprehensive and provides an excellent introduction to the subject of journalism.

It appears to the author of this study that the aspect of the material which generated the most unanimous approval was the variety of assignments and subjects from which students might choose. In addition, a certain amount of agreement was expressed regarding the efficacy of the grammar reviews and other insertions designed to support student mastery of the tasks. Certain hooks such as the film *Spotlight* at the beginning of project two were also widely appreciated. These factors seemed to have contributed to a degree of appreciation for the material, as well as

to the level of motivation and the students' progress in terms of linguistic knowledge and disciplinary competencies.

4.5 Limits

There are several reservations that must be expressed with regard to the reliability of the data gathered from students who have completed ANG5106. Among these limits are those concerning the questionnaire, while others relate to the profile of students registered for the course as well as to the students' principal source of motivation.

First of all, only seven students completed the questionnaire. This is an extremely small sample and makes it difficult to predict how other students might respond. In addition, as the questionnaires were completed in class, it is possible that the students did not want to criticize the work assigned by their teacher, even if in most cases the teacher in question was not the author of the material. As well, certain responses to items were surprising; for example, when students who said the material was not challenging at all, also indicated that the grammar reviews were extremely helpful in completing the tasks. The students who indicated that they had improved their ability to create audio or video news reports without having attempted such tasks during the course, represent an even more flagrant example.

As for the locus of motivation for students, both teachers interviewed who actually had adult learners enrolled in the course affirmed that the primary source of motivation was not the material itself, but the credits accorded to the students for completing the course. This was especially relevant considering that most of them were nearing the completion of the requirements for their high school diploma at the time of taking the course. This extrinsic objective seems to have played a predominant role in the overall motivation of study participants. Fortunately, Dornyei (1994) does not set up a dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but rather describes a complementarity between the two forms of influence.

Finally, the very nature of this optional course, ANG5106, which is chosen only by students who are already strong in English and have finished all of the required ESL courses for secondary five, has an important effect on the results of the survey. As motivation among adult learners should logically be most fragile among those who are having most difficulty with an academic

subject, it is possible that a lower level course designed along similar principles might not at all have the same impact on student enthusiasm, motivation and linguistic development.

Without a doubt, the findings of this study would need to be corroborated by larger scale studies on ESL students of various levels, in order to prove their validity.

CONCLUSION

Summary of the rationale for the study

The starting point for this study was two-fold: on the one hand, in the adult sector, ESL material seemed to frequently lack the necessary ingredients to capture interest, maintain motivation and generate language development; on the other hand, the author was presented with an opportunity to develop pedagogical material for a new optional ESL course. It seemed an ideal occasion to test out various principles in the creation of stimulating adult-level assignments.

Previous experiences with the design of learning situations had suggested to the author that the use of various elements such as dynamic subjects, hooks at the beginning of the assignments or grammar reviews inserted into the projects might lead to increased interest and enthusiasm, as well as to greater mastery of language abilities. These experiences contrasted greatly with the sullen expressions exhibited by students under the former program by objectives as well as when they used more recent textbooks adapted for the new pedagogical regime.

The literature related to this subject suggested that for adults to be able to make considerable progress in the acquisition of a second language, it is necessary for the learners to pay specific attention to the linguistic elements being taught (Ortega, 2013). The specialists on motivation in ESL acquisition such as Gardner and Dornyei detailed various elements which could influence students' attitudes. Gardner (1968) concentrated primarily on extrinsic factors while Dornyei (2001) maintained that a whole range of elements both intrinsic and extrinsic could play a role. A number of authors, led by Pishghadam et al (2016) have been working in recent years on the theory of *emotioncy*, which claims that language acquisition can be heightened if students are positively influenced on an emotional level by what they are studying. Finally, a review of task-based learning, the structure chosen for much of the material created for ANG5106, revealed that such elements as effective hooks and embedded grammar reviews could lead to the dual objective of heightened interest in the subject and a capacity to notice and integrate new linguistic knowledge (Ellis, 2009).

Responses to the research questions

In light of the questions that were posed and the literature which was consulted in the first three chapters, the contours of the present study were drawn. It was established that the specific objective would be to determine whether the criteria designated for inclusion in the creation of pedagogical material for ANG5106 would lead toward heightened enthusiasm and motivation and consequently contribute to language development.

To attempt to assess how well the material attained these objectives it was necessary to distribute a survey to students who had completed the course. Seven participants were eventually able to fill out the questionnaire. As a complement to this quantitative study, qualitative information was sought through semi-directed teacher interviews. One teacher had overseen five students who had completed the exam as well as the questionnaire, another had one student taking the course but not yet finished, while a third had no students registered but she had read and evaluated the material based on her significant professional experience in the creation and assessment of pedagogical material for adult-level ESL students.

The outcome of the student survey appears to have confirmed the author's principal hypotheses. The students did largely manifest interest, motivation and a certain increase in language or competency development with respect to the pedagogical material in question. It must be noted that the desire to please the teacher may have influenced some of the responses, while certain inconsistencies in the responses call into question whether all of the reactions were authentic and based on honest reflection.

Two of three teachers expressed extremely positive responses toward the material, whether based on observations of a student in class or else through an estimation of how learners might react to the tasks. A third interviewee was less convinced of the effectiveness of the material, attributing student motivation mostly to extrinsic factors such as the number of credits accorded for completing the course. However, on further questioning, this colleague did mention several elements which stimulated his students, such as one of the recommended films as well as certain controversial topics. He also noted the benefit of adult learners having to express their interest in

various subjects through writing tasks. All three teachers mentioned the motivating effect of students being able to choose among various assignments, subjects and news articles. One colleague recommended the inclusion of some audio or video news reports in the material.

In fact, each of the principles integrated into the assignments for ANG5106 has been written about and utilized by other authors and educators, in particular those who are interested in task-based learning. However, according to teacher C, there was a satisfying comprehensiveness to the overall conception of this course along with a smooth coordination of the various elements. Considering that the concerted aim of the material was to develop the ability to read, discuss and write about the news – an introduction to journalism – the final objective seems to have been attained. The student responses to survey items about the development of news writing and reading comprehension skills were nearly unanimous, as were the observations among the teachers that the material had fulfilled these essential aims.

Nevertheless, several doubts must be mentioned regarding the appropriateness of the parameters of this study. As the number of student participants was so small, the quantitative results must be considered somewhat inconclusive. In addition, since adult learners who decide to take an advanced level optional second language course are almost by definition more motivated than the majority of adult-level ESL students, the sample group might be considered ‘tainted’ positively from the outset. This assumption was reinforced by many of the responses to items on the survey dealing with overall feelings toward learning English. Had the course been a lower level one with a clientele less favorable toward English from the start, the results might have been more conclusive. This will be taken up in the final section on paths for further research.

Implications of the Study

Although there are a number of reservations as to the value of the quantitative findings gleaned from the student questionnaires, a number of positive elements emerged from the teacher interviews which might be seen to confirm the overall validity of this study. Despite its imperfections, this research paper would seem to point toward the importance of strategically constructing pedagogical material wherever the objective is to heighten adult learner motivation and foster student language development.

First of all, as Poupore (2014) posited, controversial current topics can capture the imagination of this clientele, as can well-selected films or other hooks. Perhaps most importantly, offering students a range of subjects, texts and even assignments can have a stimulating effect and lead to greater investment in the required tasks. Ozverir et al (2017) had included this quality in her recommendations for task-based learning assignments. Dornyei (1994) made similar suggestions.

The age group in question here ranged from 17 (including teacher B's student) to the mid-thirties. Nevertheless, the underlying principles which were explored need not be restricted to the adult sector. Dynamic hooks, exciting topics, flexibility of subjects or material, as well as relevant insertion of grammar and other elements to support completion of tasks could all be attempted at the high school level as well.

Suggestions for future Research

As mentioned above, there were a number of flaws with the quantitative component of this study which could hopefully be addressed by other researchers or teachers. These would include the size of the sample group as well as their level of second language skills. Other issues could be modified as well, with the objective of rendering the data more trustworthy.

The results of this type of study would most probably hold greater weight if more students were involved, possibly coming from a variety of milieus as well. In the present case, the majority of students were all in the same class and ranged in age from 18 to 20 years of age. Greater heterogeneity in class conditions and student profiles could prove beneficial in this respect. In addition, it might favor greater objectivity and less fear of displeasing the teacher to have students complete the questionnaire in another classroom, perhaps even with a teacher from another academic discipline distributing the survey.

Ultimately, to verify if the principles of pedagogical material design being tested here are universally valid, it would be very interesting to observe what effects similarly constructed assignments would have on students of various levels of adult education and even of the youth sector.

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APPENDIX A: ANG5106 Teacher's Guide

ANG-5106-2
Current Events

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Eugene Abrams, English teacher
CÉA LeMoynes-D'Iberville, CSMV, August 2018



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

ANG-5I06-2 Current Events is an optional course offered to students who have completed the three required levels of secondary five. It serves as an introduction to the comprehension and reinvestment of understanding of news topics. The material prepared for this new academic program is designed to enable students to analyze various types of news-related texts while also initiating them to the production of journalistic texts (both written and spoken).

There is no textbook for this course. The material is composed of seven projects and six learning situations, along with two extension activities for small groups. Several of the projects contain a review of relevant grammar, vocabulary, functional language, strategies, as well as graphic organizers for comprehension and production. As the teacher, you may choose which of these assignments are necessary or appropriate for your student (s), keeping in mind the recommendations offered in this guide.

If necessary, you may also suggest that students refer to the resource material available on the website for FGA English as a second language teachers, ESLQuebec.wixsite.com. In particular, under the resource section of ANG-5I02 and ANG-5I03, students may find persuasion sentence starters which might be useful for project four and for several of the learning situations.

SUMMARY OF MATERIALS

PROJECTS
Project 1: <i>Hard vs. soft news</i>
Project 2: <i>News reporting: Objective or Subjective?</i>
Project 3: <i>Writing a News Report</i>
Project 4: <i>Editorials</i>
Project 5: <i>Reporters' Beats</i>

Project 6: <i>Dialects</i> Project 7: <i>Sports</i>
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LEARNING SITUATIONS

LS: <i>Amateur vs. Professional News</i> LS: <i>Fake News on Social Media</i> LS: <i>Interviews</i> LS: <i>Sensational News</i> LS: <i>Sexual Harassment</i> LS: <i>Debates</i>
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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Activity: <i>News Program Video</i> Activity: <i>One Page Newspaper</i>
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE USE OF MATERIAL:

Students are strongly encouraged to complete a total of five projects. Projects one through four are mandatory, since they present the foundations of both comprehension and production of journalistic texts. They should also choose between projects five and seven. The fifth and the seventh project both serve to reinforce the students' ability to write journalistic articles, a skill which is required for the completion of the course; the teacher should encourage students to follow the instructions and format used in project three when doing either of these additional assignments. Project seven is intended specifically for sports fans. It is an alternative to project five which requires students to write an article in a specialized field other than sports.

Of course, a student who is motivated to take on more than five projects may do so.

It is recommended that students complete at least two to three learning situations. The teacher may make recommendations among the situations, based on which tasks would be most beneficial to a particular student. For instance, a student who needs more speaking practice could be encouraged to do the L.S. on debates. All other factors equal, it may be best to allow students to select which assignments appeal to them most.

If you have two or more students taking ANG-5106-2 at the same time in your classroom, project five on journalistic beats (specialized reporting) includes two optional extension activities (a one-page newspaper and the video of a news program) which can be carried out by groups of two or more students who would like to work on a collective project. Logically, students who choose to work on either of these group activities would use the instructions for project five or seven, **without** doing that task twice (once individually and once for the group). However, keep in mind that the smaller the group, the more (short) articles each student would be required to write in order to have a satisfactory final product.

The learning situation on debates is ideally suited for groups of two or more students, but can be carried out by a single student with his teacher.

The other projects and learning situations are designed to be completed individually, while all of the interaction tasks provide an option to either speak with the teacher or with a classmate. Ideally, the teacher should listen to most or all interactive tasks between pairs of students in order to provide corrective feedback.

If two students are working concurrently on the same assignment, they may discuss any questions about the instructions or contents together, as long as their communication is carried out in English. This could serve to enrich each student's experience as well as their comprehension of the subject matter.

In addition to these assignments, it is suggested that students meet with their teacher once a week to take notes on, and then summarize (orally), one major news

story on the local, national or international level. This exercise will help students to strengthen their ability to comprehend and explain news stories.

Two projects and one learning situation begin with a recommendation to watch a film related to the subject of the assignment in question. The idea is to plunge the students taking this course into the milieu of journalism. Since live streaming is illegal, **it is suggested that you ask the school administration for permission to buy the DVDs** (a total of four) so that students may watch them on a computer at school. They should all be available on Amazon. The four films in question are:

- *All the President's Men* (Project two)
- *Spotlight* (Project two)
- *Good Night and Good Luck* (Project three)
- *The Great Debaters* (Learning situation about debates)

If, for any reason, you are unable to purchase any or all of these films, the students can still complete these two projects and the learning situation without doing the task requiring them to watch the film. However, students with a Netflix account can access *Spotlight*, while presently *All the President's Men* is available on the site archive.org. *Good Night and Good Luck* and *The Great Debaters* were previously on Netflix but are currently more difficult to find anywhere on the web.

In the projects and learning situations of ANG5I06, students are asked to consult various websites whose links are provided by the teacher. However, in a few cases, students are asked to search for stories, blogs, etc. on their own, in order to complete different tasks. Some students may have more difficulty than others finding these texts. In particular, the articles in project number two might be difficult to find. Therefore, two examples are provided below in the teacher's guide. If necessary, you can copy and paste these articles in a word document and then sent to or printed out for students to help them complete the task.

PROJECT TWO - It may be difficult for students to find two different reports from newspapers with different ideological biases discussing the same event.

Here are two articles, edited to reduce their length, about student protests over gun control in the U.S.:

ANG-5106-2 Project Two: Examples of subjective news articles

Colleges cheer on high school students ditching class to protest for gun control

Applicants will receive no penalties for walkout-related suspensions

By [Valerie Richardson](#) - *The Washington Times* - Wednesday, February 28, 2018

Ditching class won't hurt your chances of gaining admission to the college of your dreams — and may even help — as long as you're playing hooky in order to agitate for gun control.

More than 200 universities, including Harvard, [Yale](#) and MIT, have [rushed](#) to reassure applicants that they won't be penalized if they're suspended or otherwise disciplined for participating in peaceful school walkouts spurred by the Feb. 14 mass shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Not only that, but some university officials have commended and encouraged would-be protesters, leaving the impression that those who take to the streets during school hours may be better positioned to win admission than those who obey the rules and attend class.

"ParklandStudentsSpeak College admission officers seek students who stand up for their beliefs. We've got you on this side," tweeted [Kirk Brennan](#), USC associate dean and director of undergraduate admissions.

Dartmouth urged students to "speak your truth," saying the college "applauds students' expressions of belief," while Mount Holyoke declared that "we support you fully as you lead peaceful demonstrations against gun violence."

"You can be assured that peaceful, responsible protests against gun violence will not negatively impact decisions on admission to Brown," said the Brown admissions office.

Wake Forest president Nathan O. Hatch gave student protesters his blessing by tweeting, "Prospective @WakeForest students protesting for change: We applaud your courage and would be proud to call you Demon Deacons."

The overwhelmingly pro-walkout sentiment from colleges threatens to undercut principals struggling to keep the classroom chaos to a minimum, not to mention parents worried about the safety issues associated with crowds of teens flooding the streets during the workday.

In 2014, four Denver police officers were struck by a car as they tried to manage traffic during an impromptu Black Lives Matter walkout by 500 students at East High School, with one officer critically injured after he was dragged underneath the vehicle.

The two national walkouts scheduled so far should be far larger. More than 185,000 students are expected to cut class for the March 14 protest hosted by Women's March Youth EMPOWER, the youth arm of the left-wing Women's March, according to a Wednesday press release.

A second protest, the National School Walkout, is slated for April 20, the 19th anniversary of the Columbine High School mass shooting. The first event falls on a Wednesday, the second on a Thursday.

Thousands of students walk out of school in nationwide gun violence protest

By [Joe Heim](#), [Marissa J. Lang](#) and [Susan Svrluga](#) March 14

Tens of thousands of students across the country walked out of their classrooms Wednesday and onto athletic fields and city streets as part of a massive national protest on gun violence spurred by a Florida high school shooting a month ago that left 17 dead.

The walkouts, which came 10 days before a march on Washington that could draw hundreds of thousands of students to the nation's capital, are unprecedented in recent American history, not seen in size or scope since student protests of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s.

Supporters say the walkouts and demonstrations represent a realization of power and influence by young people raised on social media who have come of age in an era of never-ending wars, highly publicized mass shootings and virulent national politics.

The protests unfolded in major cities across the country — New York, Washington, Chicago, Seattle — and hundreds of smaller towns and communities as well.

In Maryland, students held pictures of the victims. At Columbine High in Colorado, the site 19 years ago of one of the first mass school shootings, students filed solemnly onto a soccer field and sent aloft balloons in memory of the victims there and in Florida. And at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, where 14 students and three staff members were killed Feb. 14, students who were supposed to gather on the football field for 17 minutes and then go back to their classrooms, started walking — and kept walking to a park.

Students involved in the protests have been outspoken about their frustration with adults and political leaders who they believe have made them less safe by not doing more to curb gun violence or address school safety and mental health issues.

Many of the participants said the focus on gun control was not an expression of party preference. What they are demanding from Republicans and Democrats alike is action on an issue they believe has been put aside by lawmakers for too long. In an election year, with every seat in the House and a third of the Senate up for votes, the students are determined to make an impact.

The group is demanding that lawmakers increase the age for people to purchase weapons, ban military-style weapons and demilitarize police forces.

Most of the student protests were approved by, and often coordinated with, school administrators. But there were reports of some schools where students were not allowed to hold protests or were penalized if they did.

In Washington, many protesting students heard from lawmakers at an impromptu rally.

“I look at the crowd and I see the future, and I see you, and I came here to say thank you,” Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) said before leading the crowd in a “Si, se puede” chant, the Spanish phrase for “Yes, we can.” “Because I know you will accomplish what I and others have failed to do.”

LEARNING SITUATION – FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For task two of this learning situation, students read an article about Jimmy, a young heroin addict and future dealer. They then decide if the story is true or not, citing their reasons, and discuss their opinions with the teacher. It is important for the teacher to allow the student to express their thoughts without providing them with any hints. However, it is at the discretion of the teacher to

let the student know afterward the truth about this story: the journalist, Janet Cooke, after having won a prestigious award for the article in 1981, was found to have invented it and passed it off as the truth. For a serious newspaper such as the Washington Post, this was considered scandalous and her career was essentially destroyed after her journalistic fraud was discovered.

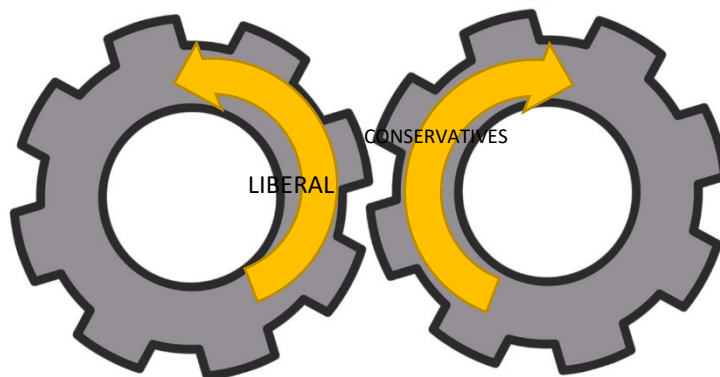
For additional information about ANG5106, you may look at the power point that also serves as an overview of the course for students.

APPENDIX B: ANG5106 Sample Project

ANG-5106-2 Current Events

Project two

News reporting: Objective or Subjective?



When we think about journalism and journalists, we may imagine that they are genuinely trying to find out the facts about issues and events and that they are completely objective or neutral. However, even though this is an accurate description of the work of many people in the news industry, many news sources have a particular bias, usually leaning toward one political vision of society or another. In Canada, this would usually be either Liberal or Conservative while in the United States, the division is generally Democratic versus Republican.

Furthermore, other powerful organizations such as religious groups may also put pressure on news sources to keep certain information from being revealed. In order to be an informed citizen, it is very important to observe how the news may be influenced by factors other than a desire by reporters to discover and reveal the pure facts.



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A) Watch a film about reporters and current events and take notes, using the rubric below. Discuss your observations and conclusions about the film with your partner or teacher.

- One suggestion is ***All the Presidents Men*** about the Watergate scandal, that led to the resignation of the President of the United States in 1974.
- Another film is ***Spotlight*** which deals with newspaper reports of a scandal in the Roman Catholic church in Boston.

Name of film	
Summary of the film	
Setting (Time and place)	
Opening situation	
Main conflict	
Principle events	
Conclusion	
Message of the film	
What did you learn about journalism and journalists?	

B) To complete this task, you can work alone or with a partner.



If you are working alone :

- Choose a recent news event. You may choose from various types of events: politics, environment, international, science, crime, etc...
- Find two articles about the same event, from two different sources. You should choose two news sources with different ideologies, such as the Toronto Star and the Toronto Sun in Canada or The New York Times and the New York Post in the United States.
(*Since it is difficult to find two such articles, you may ask your teacher for the two articles that appear in the teacher's guide to ANG5106.)
- Using a graphic organizer, form an outline and summary of each report and then compare the two reports.
- Using the notes in your rubric, discuss the differences (and similarities) in the two reports with your teacher.



With partner :




- Together, choose a recent news story. You may choose various types of events: politics, environment, international, education, etc... Each partner is then responsible for finding a separate article about the same event. You and your partner should choose two news sources with different ideologies, such as the Toronto Star and the Toronto Sun in Canada or The New York Times and the New York Post in the United States.
- Using a graphic organizer, each of you should form an outline and summary of your article.

- Using the notes in your rubric, discuss the differences (and similarities) in the two reports with your partner. Then discuss the subject again with your teacher.

News source (newspaper, television station, etc...)		
News Event		
Title of report (and byline)		
Introductory sentence (<i>also called the lead/lede</i>)		
Summary of intro (5 w's- <i>who, what, where, when, why and how</i>)		
Body of report (details of story- minimum 4 facts + 1 quote, if possible)		
Conclusion		
What differences did you observe in how each news source reported this event?		

What conclusions can you make about the ideology or opinions of the readers of each news source?		

POSSIBLE NEWS SOURCES:

LIBERAL (DEMOCRATIC)	
CBC news: http://www.cbc.ca/news 	Toronto Star: https://www.thestar.com/ 
NPR: (American news site) https://www.npr.org/sections/news/ 	BBC: (British news site) http://www.bbc.com/news 
New York Times : https://www.nytimes.com/ 	
Alternative news sites: https://eluxemagazine.com/magazine/honest-news/sites/ 	(neutral international news site) www.reuters.com/ 
CONSERVATIVE (REPUBLICAN)	
Toronto Sun http://torontosun.com/ 	National Post : (Canadian newspaper) http://nationalpost.com/ 
The Washington Times : (US newspaper) https://www.washingtontimes.com/ 	The New York Post: (US newspaper) https://nypost.com/news/ 

APPENDIX C: ANG5106 Sample Learning Situation

ANG-5106-2
Current Events

Learning Situation**SENSATIONAL NEWS****Competencies**

- C1-Interacts orally in English

- **C2-Reinvests understanding of texts**
- **C3-Writes and produces texts**

Student's name : _____

Date : _____

*Eugene Abrams, English teacher
CÉA LeMoyne-D'Iberville, CSMV, August 2018*



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SITUATION:

You are the producer of a newspaper or radio/television news program and you need to decide what type of news you will report on. The president of your news agency wants your production to be popular.

Write an editorial article (or prepare an audio/video commentary) explaining what type of subjects your news service will report on and why you have made this choice.

THIS LEARNING SITUATION HAS FOUR (4) TASKS FOR YOU TO COMPLETE:

TASK 1: Singing about sensationalism

In this task, you will watch a video of Joe Jackson's song, *The Sunday Papers* and respond to several questions.

TASK 2: How does watching the news make you feel?

In this task, you will watch documentaries based on terrorism, natural disasters, sex scandals, etc... and comment on the effect that they have on you.

Then watch examples of human-interest documentaries (based on similar events) and comment on how you feel afterward.

TASK 3: Sensationalism versus human interest stories

In this task, you will read several blog entries about sensationalism and human-interest stories in the news and then answer questions in a graphic organizer.

TASK 4: What news stories would you publish?

In this task, you will write an editorial article (or prepare an audio/video commentary) explaining what type of subjects your news service will report on (sensational or human interest) and why you have made this choice.

TASK I: Singing about sensationalism

Would you want to read a (true) recent news story about a military general who killed himself by drinking poison in the courtroom to avoid going to prison? In the challenge to grab the reader's or viewer's attention, newspapers and news programs have used various strategies to make their material more dynamic. The two most common techniques have traditionally been sensationalism and human-interest stories.

Watch a video of Joe Jackson's song, *The Sunday Papers*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZ3NDP-Qiak>







Joe Jackson gives examples of sensational news headlines, which can be contrasted with human interest stories, which describe people or situations in a personal way so that readers can better understand and relate to them.


What are the names of the newspapers mentioned in the song?	

How would you describe the kind of stories published in these newspapers?	
Give at least three examples of articles mentioned in the song.	
Would you read one of those newspapers? Why or why not?	
Do you think newspapers like these are popular? Why or why not?	

TASK 2: How does watching the news make you feel?

Watch the following examples of documentaries based on terrorism and natural disasters and comment on the effect that they have on you. Then read or watch examples of human-interest documentaries (some based on the same tragic stories) and comment on how you feel afterward.

Sensational	
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kZqqSI9-s 	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7X3fyld2U0 
Human Interest	
https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/remembering-911-three-docs-to-watch 	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRYW1lc-jsU 

https://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/magazine/ngm-last-chase?cs=featured&gs=recent	

You may search on the internet for other examples of both types of documentaries.

Take notes on two of the documentaries in the rubric below:

Name of documentary		
Subject /type of news (sensational or human interest)		
Summary of introduction		
Chronological development of 3-5 main events or ideas in the documentary		

Conclusion		
How were sound effects, video content, oral expressions or other elements used to influence the viewer? Minimum five examples		
Your opinion of the documentary -was it interesting, exciting, informative etc...? -explain		

How did you feel after watching this documentary?		

TASK 3: Sensationalism versus human interest stories

Read the following blog entries about sensationalism and human-interest stories in the news and then answer the questions in the graphic organizer.

BLOG ENTRY 1:

Is Sensationalism in the News Bad?

Sensationalism Actually Serves a Purpose, Historian Finds

by [Tony Rogers](#)

Updated October 26, 2017

Professional critics and news consumers alike have long criticized the news media for running sensational content. But is sensationalism in the news media really such a bad thing?

Sensationalism's Long History

[Sensationalism](#) is nothing new. In his book "A History of News," NYU journalism professor Mitchell Stephens writes that sensationalism has been around ever since early humans began telling stories, ones that invariably focused on sex and conflict.

"I have never found a time when there wasn't a form for the exchange of news that included sensationalism — and this goes back to anthropological accounts of preliterate societies, when news raced up and down the beach that a man had fallen into a rain barrel while trying to visit his lover," Stephens said in an email.

Fast forward thousands of years and you have the 19th-century circulation wars between Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. Both men, the media titans of their day, were accused of sensationalizing the news in order to sell more papers.

Whatever the time or setting, "sensationalism is unavoidable in news — because we humans are wired, probably for reasons of natural selection, to be alert to sensations, particularly those involving sex and violence," Stephens said.

Sensationalism also serves a function by promoting the spread of information to less-literate audiences and strengthening the social fabric, Stephens said.

Criticism of sensationalism also has a long history. The Roman philosopher Cicero griped that the Acta Diurna — handwritten sheets that were the equivalent of [ancient Rome's](#) daily paper — neglected real news in favor of the latest gossip about gladiators, Stephens found.

A Golden Age of Journalism?

Today, media critics seem to imagine that things were better before the rise of 24/7 cable news and the internet. They point to icons like TV news pioneer Edward R. Murrow as exemplars of this supposed golden age of journalism.

But such an age never existed, Stephens [writes](#) at the Center for Media Literacy: "The golden age of political coverage that journalism critics pine over — the era when reporters concentrated on the 'real' issues — turns out to have been as mythical as the golden age of politics."

Ironically even Murrow, venerated for challenging Sen. Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist witch hunt, did his share of celebrity interviews in his long-running "Person to Person" series, which critics savaged as empty-headed chatter.

The Junk Food Factor

There's another point to be made about sensational news stories: We love them.

Sensational stories are the junk food of our news diet, the ice cream sundae that you eagerly gobble up. You know it's bad for you but it's delicious. And you can always have a salad tomorrow.

It's the same with news. Sometimes there's nothing better than poring over the sober pages of The New York Times, but other times it's a treat to peruse the Daily News or the New York Post.

And despite what high-minded critics might say, there's nothing wrong with that. Indeed, an interest in the sensational seems to be, if nothing else, an all-too-human quality.

Source : <https://www.thoughtco.com/is-sensationalism-in-the-news-media-bad-2074048>

BLOG ENTRY 2

Why Open School of Journalism believes that Human Interest Journalism is important

Human interest journalism takes a closer, more personal look at the news. While conventional journalism presents the big picture, sticking to hard facts and statistics, human interest journalism focuses on details or aspects that resonate emotionally with the public. It is sometimes described as "getting the story behind the story" or "putting a human face on the news."

The straight story might tell you that West Africa has seen 13,268 cases of Ebola and 4,960 deaths. The human interest piece may feature survivors who have united to care for orphans whose parents succumbed.

The goal of hard news is to remain objective, but human interest stories can be written and presented under less stringent rules and with greater flexibility. These two styles of journalism have completely different goals; the one attempts to inform, the other, to engage readers or viewers on a personal level.

Purposes of human interest journalism

Human interest stories often relate to or support other content. Coverage of a devastating tornado in Texas included a story about a man who'd erected a homemade sign in his yard: "For Sale. Split-level. Mostly Level." The article was about maintaining a sense of humor in times of crisis. Some articles are written to tug at heart strings, but others provide levity on bleak news days.

Other pieces are meant to entertain. The ordinary lives of movie actors, athletes and politicians are interesting to the public, as proven by the enduring success of *Reader's Digest* and *People* magazine. People like knowing that their favorite daytime soap star eats junk food for breakfast—it makes them feel less guilty about their own diets. With the help of the media, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy ushered an enthralled public into the White House. Americans, women especially, relished reports of her table settings, the clothes in her closet and her day-to-day life with the president. That is one example of how the side story becomes the story.

One of the most common forms of human-interest journalism is the article or series featuring people or animals bearing up in the face of adversity. People respond emotionally to accounts of rescue, citizens pulling together, individuals maintaining their faith in the midst of catastrophe. Human interest coverage of 9/11 may have forever altered public perception of what New Yorkers are really like. Film footage following the Japanese tsunami in 2011 inspired hearts worldwide; victims in the aftermath were shown not looting, but helping shop owners put their businesses back together. Just about everyone is moved by stories of human resilience. Profiles of cancer patients, amputees or victims of violence may hold the public's interest for years. Videos of rescued animals are often the Internet's most frequently viewed.

Detractors

Human interest journalism does have detractors. Many conventional journalists feel that this approach removes objectivity. They contend that stories are usually written with a

slant toward furthering a certain agenda, or to manipulate an audience into thinking or responding in a certain way. Its harshest critics don't believe this format should be included in objective news reporting.

The integrity of the journalist

A feature story on AIDS patients could increase understanding and inspire compassion—or it could start a panic. It could solicit contributions for research and treatment—or it could promote hateful stereotypes.

In the hands of gifted journalists, this human approach inspires charity, encourages civic involvement and sparks public discourse on tough topics. At its noblest, it rouses people out of apathy and into action. Sometimes it is a catalyst for change, prompting readers to take a deeper look inside them. At the very least, it may elicit a much-needed laugh or touch of inspiration at the end of a rough day.

It is the talent and integrity of the individual writer that determines the value of human-interest journalism.

Source: <https://www.openschoolofjournalism.com/distance-education-program/courses/human-interest-journalism-jg180>

Now, answer the questions in the graphic organizer.

Type of news story	Sensationalism	Human Interest Stories
Brief definition		
Subjects appropriate for this type of news		
Characteristics of this type of journalism		

Advantages (Reasons these stories could appeal to the public)		
Disadvantages		
Do you prefer sensationalism or human-interest stories? Give reasons.		

If you wish to find more information on different issues regarding sensationalistic journalism, you may explore some of these blogs:

UWRT 1102 Portfolio : <https://1102portfolioregalado.weebly.com/research-blog/fifth-blog-sensationalism-in-the-news-media-benefits-of-sensationalism>



ScienceLine:

<http://scienceline.org/2008/09/the-science-of-journalism-why-sensational-sells/>



ONAethics:

<https://ethics.journalists.org/topics/sensational-and-gory-material/>

***Sensationalism – Chicanery of Ideas***

<https://sanchaاربlog.wordpress.com/2016/02/28/why-sensationalism-sells/>

**TASK 4: What news stories would you publish?**

A)

You are the producer of a newspaper or radio/television news program and you need to decide what type of news you will report on. The president of your news agency wants your production to be popular.

He suggests you read the following blog entry about how the media reports on crime before you make your decision.

Understanding how the media reports crime

While it can perform an important public service, media outlets are, first and foremost, a business. In the current global financial crisis, news media is a struggling business.

Focus of media on crime

Crime stories constitute the fourth largest category of stories for newspapers and television after sports, general interest and business which is an over-representation of the actual amount of crime occurring. Research suggests that over 50% of crime stories in a sample of Canadian newspapers dealt with offences involving violence but offences involving violence represent less than 6% of reported offences.⁴ This is likely a significant factor in the public belief that crime is on the rise. For example, Canada fortunately has a relatively low homicide rate. Every year, approximately, 600 Canadians are murdered and because murder remains a relatively rare event in our society, most of these murders will garner some media attention. So while homicide makes up less than 1% of crimes committed in Canada, it garners a significant amount of media coverage of crime.

The media is most likely to focus on stories that highlight the unique, the sensational, the extreme, and those that have the potential to impact the greatest number of people. For crime-related stories, the media are most likely to focus on events that have occurred multiple times, for example a number of assaults or break-ins that are centred in a small geographic area, or those that are very unlikely to occur. Homicides committed by young offenders are often front-page news and may cause people to believe that youth violence is at significant levels, despite being incredibly rare. The reason they are so newsworthy is because they are so rare – they shock us, are unique and because of that, may dominate headlines for days and weeks, thereby giving the public a distorted view of how common these crimes are.

The media does not just decide what stories get that kind of attention, but what stories do not get that kind of attention. The murder of a homeless man is not likely to get as much media attention as the murder of a teenage girl from a middle class family. The media can focus on a story, thereby making it headline news, or ignore a different story, and the public will never know.

While focusing on the sensational and most violent crimes, it may seem the media ignores the more common types of crime that are more likely to affect individual readers or viewers, such as single instances of auto theft or break and enter. The media also rarely covers sexual assault and partner assault cases, which are largely crimes that impact women and children and are the focus of many victim service provision agencies in Canada. These serious crimes against women and children often remain hidden from law enforcement, which influences media coverage because they tend to cover crimes that come to the attention of the formal criminal justice system.

Source: <https://crcvc.ca/publications/media-guide/understanding/>

B)

Now, you are ready to present your decision. What type of news will you report on?

Write an editorial article (or prepare an audio/video commentary) explaining what type of subjects your news service will cover and why you have made this choice (support your arguments with quotes or ideas from the above articles or any additional sources you may find). Use the following graphic organizer to structure your ideas in note form before writing your article or script. Refer to information from the blog posts above or other sources to support your ideas.

Editorial article, audio commentary, or video commentary(select one)	
Title	
Opening Sentence	
Type (or types) of news you will report on	

Reasons for decision	
Supporting facts or quotes (indicate sources)	
Possible counter arguments (and refutation)	
Conclusions (including questions to be pursued in the future)	

Write an article (250-350 words) or a script for a recorded audio or video presentation (3-5 minutes).

APPENDIX D: Student questionnaire

A) Reactions to the coursework

- 1. I find the tasks in ANG5106 interesting.*
- 2. I find the tasks enjoyable.*
- 3. I like the topics of the learning assignments.*
- 4. I enjoy the texts, films, music videos and other used at the beginning of each learning assignment.*
- 5. I focused my attention while doing these tasks.*
- 6. I found the tasks challenging.*
- 7. I found the tasks easy.*
- 8. I put a lot of effort into these tasks.*
- 9. I consider the contents and tasks in ANG5106 useful for developing my English comprehension skills.*
- 10. I consider the learning material in ANG5106 useful for developing my English vocabulary.*
- 11. I consider the grammar reviews useful for developing my ability to write and speak correctly.*
- 12. The grammar reviews, notes organizers and other supporting information in the assignments helped me to complete the tasks.*
- 13. I consider these tasks useful to help develop my ability to write news reports.*
- 14. I consider these tasks useful to help develop my ability to produce audio or video news reports.*
- 15. These tasks helped me to prepare for the exam.*
- 16. I appreciated the opportunity to choose some of my own subjects or materials in the tasks.*

17. I found it stimulating to be able to use the internet frequently for the assignments in this course.

2) Feelings about English and expectations for the course ANG5106 before starting

18. I like English films and/television series.

19. Studying English is important to me in order to help my future career.

20. Studying English is important to me because I think I'll need it for further studies.

21. I looked forward to this optional English class before I started taking it.

22. I like to read the news in English.

23. I think learning English is important in order to learn more about the society and culture of its speakers.

24. Studying English is important to me, because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English.

25. I really like the actual process of learning English.

26. Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a personally important goal (e.g., to get into a college or university program).

27. Studying English is important to me because my life will change if I acquire a good command of English.

28. My dreams of how I want to use English in the future are the same as those of my parents'.

29. I really like to listen to music in English.

30. I find learning English really interesting.

31. I study English because with English I can enjoy travelling to other provinces or to other countries.

3) Student background information

(Please provide the following information by ticking (✓) in the box or writing your response in the space to help us to better interpret your previous answers.)

32. *Male* ____ / *Female* ____

33. *Your age (in years):* _____

34. *Have you spent a longer period (at least a total of three months) in English-speaking communities or contexts (e.g., travelling, working, studying)?* _____

35. *Are you working presently or have you been working recently?* _____

36. *Do you use (or did you use) English at work?* _____

37. *Do you speak English with any family members?* _____

38. *Do you speak English with friends?* _____

39. *Do you hear and/or speak English frequently in your neighborhood?* _____

APPENDIX E: Randomized Questionnaire English

Please respond by using a scale of six levels, ranging from ‘I strongly disagree’ to I strongly agree’:

I strongly disagree-1/I moderately disagree-2/I slightly disagree-3/I slightly agree-4/I moderately agree-5/I strongly agree-6

I find the winters in Quebec are too short. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Studying English is important for me in order to prepare for my future career. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I appreciate the subjects/themes of the assignments in ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

My mind was focused while I was working on my assignments for ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The learning tasks in ANG5106 were challenging for me. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I have always enjoyed the process of learning English 1 2 3 4 5 6

I worked very hard while completing my assignments for ANG5106 1 2 3 4 5 6

Learning English is very important to me so that I can attain a significant personal goal (for example, being accepted into a Cegep or university program). 1 2 3 4 5 6

I consider the study material in ANG5106 very useful to develop my English vocabulary. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I consider the grammar reviews in the projects in ANG5106 useful to help me develop my ability to write and speak correctly in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Learning English is important to me because I would be ashamed if I received low marks. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The grammar reviews, the notes organizers and other supporting information in the learning activities helped me to complete the tasks in ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The learning tasks in ANG5106 were useful for the development of my ability to write news articles. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The learning tasks in this course helped to prepare me for the exam 1 2 3 4 5 6

Studying English is important to me because my life will change if I develop a good command of English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I appreciated the opportunity to choose some of my own subjects or texts in the tasks of ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I found it stimulating to be able to use the internet often in the activities for this course. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The assignments for ANG5106 were more interesting than those I did in the other secondary five courses (5101, 5102 and 5103). 1 2 3 4 5 6

I enjoy watching film and television series in English 1 2 3 4 5 6

I consider the content and the tasks in ANG5106 very useful for the development of my comprehension skills in English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Studying English is important because I think I will need it for my future studies. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I appreciated the texts, the films, the videos, etc... at the beginning of each assignment in ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I looked forward to this optional English class before I started taking it. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I enjoy reading the news or watching the news in English 1 2 3 4 5 6

I think that learning English is important in order to better understand anglophone society and culture. 1 2 3 4 5 6

The learning tasks in ANG5106 were easy for me. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I can imagine myself in the future using English in the same way as my parents. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I find that it's very interesting to learn English. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I consider that certain tasks for the course ANG5106 were useful for the development of my ability to produce audio or video news reports. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I enjoy listening to music in English 1 2 3 4 5 6

I enjoy studying English because this could help me to easily travel in other provinces or other countries. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I was motivated to complete the assignments for the courses in secondary five (5101, 5102 and 5103) before beginning the course ANG5106 1 2 3 4 5 6

The assignments for ANG5106 increased my level of motivation in English 1 2 3 4 5 6

The learning tasks in ANG5106 were useful for the development of my ability to understand and discuss news reports. 1 2 3 4 5 6

3) General information about student participants

(Please complete the following information with a checkmark ✓ or by writing in the space provided.)

Man ___ / Woman ___ / Other ___

Your age (in years): _____

Have you spent an extended period of time (a total of at least three months) in an Anglophone community or context (for example, while travelling, for work or for studies) _____

Are you currently working or have you worked recently? _____

Do you often use or did you often use English at work? _____

Do you often speak English with members of your family? _____

Do you often speak English with your friends? _____

Do you often hear or speak English in your neighborhood? _____

APPENDIX F: Randomized Questionnaire French

SVP, répondez en utilisant une échelle de six niveaux, allant de « Je suis fortement en désaccord » à « Je suis fortement en accord » :

Je suis fortement en désaccord -1/ Je suis modérément en désaccord -2/ Je suis légèrement en désaccord -3/ Je suis légèrement en accord -4/ Je suis modérément en accord -5/ Je suis fortement en accord -6

Je trouve que les hivers au Québec sont trop courts. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Étudier l'anglais est important afin de préparer pour ma future carrière. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'ai apprécié les sujets/thèmes des travaux en ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'étais concentré en faisant mes travaux en ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Les tâches d'apprentissage en ANG5106 présentaient un défi pour moi. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'ai toujours aimé le processus d'apprendre l'anglais. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'ai exercé beaucoup d'efforts en faisant les travaux en ANG5106 1 2 3 4 5 6

Apprendre l'anglais est important pour moi pour que je puisse atteindre un but personnel important (par exemple, être accepté dans un programme au Cégep ou à l'université).

1 2 3 4 5 6

Je considère le matériel d'apprentissage en ANG5106 très utile pour le développement de mon vocabulaire en anglais.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Je considère les révisions de grammaire dans les projets en ANG5106 utiles pour développer ma capacité d'écrire et de parler correctement en anglais.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Apprendre l'anglais est important pour moi parce que j'aurais honte si j'ai eu des mauvaises notes.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Les révisions de grammaire, les organisateurs de notes et les autres informations complémentaires dans les activités d'apprentissage m'ont aidé à accomplir les tâches en ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Les tâches d'apprentissage en ANG5106 étaient utiles pour le développement de ma capacité d'écrire des articles sur l'actualité. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Les tâches dans ce cours m'ont aidé à préparer pour l'examen. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Étudier l'anglais est important pour moi parce que ma vie changera si j'acquiers une bonne maîtrise de l'anglais. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'ai apprécié l'opportunité de choisir quelques-uns de mes propres sujets ou textes dans les tâches en ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

C'était stimulant de pouvoir utiliser l'internet souvent pour les activités dans ce cours. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Les travaux pour ANG5106 étaient plus intéressants que ceux pour les autres cours de secondaire cinq (5101, 5102 et 5103). 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'aime regarder les films et les séries télévisées en anglais. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Je considère que le contenu et les tâches en ANG5106 sont très utiles pour le développement de mes capacités de compréhension en l'anglais. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Étudier l'anglais est important parce je pense que j'en aurais besoin pour mes futures études 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'ai apprécié les textes, les films, les vidéos, etc. au début de chaque travail d'apprentissage en ANG5106. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'avais hâte de commencer le cours ANG5106 avant de débiter. 1 2 3 4 5 6

J'aime lire ou écouter les actualités en anglais 1 2 3 4 5 6

Les tâches d'apprentissage en ANG5106 étaient faciles pour moi Je pense qu'apprendre l'anglais c'est important afin de mieux comprendre la société et la culture du monde anglophone.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Je me vois à l'avenir en train d'utiliser l'anglais de la même manière que mes parents.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Je trouve que c'est très intéressant d'apprendre l'anglais
1 2 3 4 5 6

Je considère que certaines des tâches en ANG5106 sont utiles pour le développement de ma capacité à produire des capsules d'actualités audio ou vidéo.
1 2 3 4 5 6

J'aime écouter la musique en anglais.
1 2 3 4 5 6

J'étudie l'anglais parce qu'avec l'anglais je pourrais voyager facilement dans d'autres provinces ou dans d'autres pays.
1 2 3 4 5 6

J'étais motivé à faire les travaux pour les cours de secondaire cinq (5101, 5102 et 5106) même avant de commencer le cours ANG5106.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Les travaux pour ANG5106 ont augmenté mon niveau de motivation en anglais.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Les tâches d'apprentissage en ANG5106 étaient utiles pour le développement de ma capacité de comprendre et de discuter des articles sur l'actualité.
1 2 3 4 5 6

3) Des informations générales sur les étudiants participants

(SVP, indiquer les informations suivantes en cochant (✓) ou en écrivant dans l'espace correspondante.)

Homme ___ / Femme ___ / Autre ___

Votre âge (en années): _____

Avez-vous passé une période étendue (un total d'au moins trois mois) dans une communauté ou un contexte anglophones (par exemple, en voyage, pour le travail ou pour les études)? _____

Est-ce que vous travaillez actuellement ou avez-vous travaillé récemment? _____

Utilisez-vous ou avez-vous souvent utilisé l'anglais au travail? _____

Parlez-vous l'anglais souvent avec des membres de votre famille? _____

Parlez-vous l'anglais souvent avec vos amis? _____

Entendez-vous ou parlez-vous l'anglais souvent dans votre quartier? _____

APPENDIX G: Student Consent Form

La Faculté d'éducation

**Invitation à participer au projet de recherche****L'Évaluation du matériel pédagogique développé pour le cours ANG5106**

Responsable : Eugène Abrams, finissant au programme de MES-profil Anglais langue seconde. Université de Sherbrooke

Projet de recherche réalisé dans le cadre du cours PRS 802 : Essai

Madame, Monsieur,

Nous sollicitons par la présente votre participation à la recherche en titre. Cette recherche vise à mieux évaluer les travaux assignés dans le cadre du cours ANG5106.

En quoi consiste le projet?

En collaboration avec votre enseignant, à l'automne 2019, on vous demandera de remplir un questionnaire dans la langue de votre choix, soit en anglais ou en français, une fois que vous auriez terminé le cours ANG5106. Normalement le questionnaire prend une dizaine de minutes à remplir.

Y a-t-il des risques, inconvénients ou bénéfices?

Il n'y a **pas de risques** associés à votre participation à ce projet. Votre note dans le cours en question ne serait pas influencée et votre nom ne sera pas inscrit sur la feuille, donc, vos réponses resteraient anonymes. Donc, il n'y a aucun lien entre ce projet de recherche et votre évaluation en anglais. La contribution à l'avancement des connaissances au sujet du développement du matériel pour le cours ANG5106 représente le bénéfice principal prévu. Aucune compensation d'ordre monétaire n'est accordée.

Qu'est-ce que l'enseignant, Eugène Abrams, fera avec les renseignements obtenus dans ce projet?

Les données recueillies par cette étude sont entièrement **confidentielles** et ne pourront en aucun cas mener à l'identification des participants. Les données recueillies seront conservées sous la responsabilité d'Eugène Abrams. **Seuls M. Abrams, votre enseignant et les responsables du cours**

PRS 802 auront accès aux données. Les autres membres du personnel de l'école n'y auront pas accès. Les renseignements tirés de votre dossier seront détruits au plus tard un an après la fin du projet. Les résultats du projet seront diffusés dans des articles professionnels et des communications dans des colloques professionnels. Les résultats généraux seront aussi présentés au personnel de l'école.

Est-ce que je suis obligé de participer?

Vous êtes totalement **libre de participer ou non à cette étude**. De plus, votre décision de participer ou non à cette étude n'affectera en rien les services reçus. Votre accord nous aidera à mieux comprendre les éléments à conserver ou à améliorer dans le matériel pédagogique du cours ANG5106.

Que faire si j'ai des questions concernant le projet?

Ce projet a été revu et approuvé par les responsables du cours PRS 802. Cette démarche vise à assurer la **protection des participantes et participants**.

Si vous avez des questions concernant ce projet de recherche, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec

- La professeur d'Eugène Abrams : Professeur Lynn Thomas
lynn.thomas@usherbrooke.ca

[Signature]

Eugène Abrams

[Signature]

MES, Faculté d'éducation. Université de
Sherbrooke

Nom de l'enseignant (e) participant

*J'ai lu et compris le document d'information au sujet du projet **L'Évaluation du matériel pédagogique développé pour le cours ANG5106**. J'ai compris les conditions, les risques et les bienfaits de ma participation à ce projet. J'ai obtenu des réponses aux questions que je me posais au sujet de ce projet. J'accepte librement de participer à ce projet de recherche.*

J'autorise Eugène Abrams à utiliser les renseignements du questionnaire ☐ OUI
que je complète pour les objectifs de son projet de recherche en ☐ NON
développement de matériel pédagogique.

Votre nom _____ (nom du participant)

Signature du participant :

Nom :

Date :

APPENDIX H: Interview Questions for Teachers A and B

1. How would you describe the motivation level of the students taking ANG5106, before they began the course and then once they started doing the assignments?
2. Did they seem to exhibit any type of emotional response to any of the tasks or themes in the assignments? Give examples.
3. Did you observe any improvement in their English skills over the period when they were taking the course? Explain.
4. How would you describe their response to the assignments for ANG5106 compared to their reactions to the earlier courses in Secondary 5 (5101, 5102 and 5103)?
5. Which assignments seemed least popular? How would you explain this?
6. Which assignments were most popular? Why do you think so?
7. Were you aware of any aspects of the assignments that students seemed to appreciate – the films or other opening activities (hooks), the grammar review, the tasks...?
8. Do you have any other observations or recommendations with respect to the assignments for ANG5106?
9. How do you think the age or circumstances of your students might have affected their motivation or lack of motivation in relation to the assignments for ANG5106, in particular in comparison with the students in the regular adult education program?
10. How do you account for the lack of discipline of certain students in ANG5106? Do you see any connection to their reaction to the academic material? Explain.

APPENDIX I: Modified version of interview questions for teacher C

1. Do you believe your adult students, were they registered in ANG5106, would exhibit any type of emotional response to any of the tasks or themes in the assignments? What elements of the material do you believe would generate enthusiasm? Explain.
2. Do you suspect that students would be motivated by this material? Why or Why not? Give examples.
3. Do you believe that the assignments for this course, including the grammar reviews and other supporting cognitive elements would lead to improvement in their English skills over the period when they would be taking the course? Explain.
4. What role might student motivation generated by these assignments play in any student language development?
5. How would you imagine your students might respond to the assignments for ANG5106 compared to their reactions to the earlier courses in Secondary 5 (5101, 5102 and 5103)? Why?
6. Which assignments might be popular or unpopular among your students who might take this course in the future? Explain.
7. Which specific aspects of the assignments might be particularly appreciated by your students – the films or other opening activities (hooks), the grammar review, the tasks...?
8. Do you have any other observations or recommendations with respect to the assignments for ANG5106?
9. How do you think the age, language abilities or circumstances of your students might affect their motivation or lack of motivation in relation to the assignments for ANG5106?

Déclaration d'intégrité

relative au plagiat

J'atteste que je suis l'auteure ou l'auteur du présent travail et que tout ce qui a été emprunté est attribué à sa source et proprement référencé.

S'il s'agit d'un travail d'équipe, je me reconnais responsable de toutes ses parties, y compris celles faites par mes collègues.

Signature : abre2702 eugene.abrams@usherbrooke.ca

Nom : Eugène Abrams

—

Date : 7 décembre , 2019 _____